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The Job Corps, 1964-1969

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THE JOB CORPS
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ABSTRACT

The Job Corps was established in 1964 with great expectations among the Democrats. Yet from the beginning there were dissenting voices. Some Republicans called the entire antipoverty program an election year gimmick. Certain communities refused to allow centers to be established in their areas. Others asked that the centers be closed shortly after their establishment because of community friction. The program was called ineffective and fiscally irresponsible. Congress responded to the criticisms with a series of amendments. By the end of 1969, the program had been shifted from the Office of Economic Opportunity to the Labor Department and a large number of the centers had been shut down.

It is the aim of this thesis to examine the Job Corps program from its establishment in 1964 through its shift to the Labor Department in 1969, attempting to present an overall view of the program, and to draw from this some conclusions about its necessity and achievements.

The paper begins with an examination of the conditions of educationally, economically, and culturally deprived young people in the early sixties, and discusses the need and the historical justification for a program such as the Job Corps. This is followed by a discussion of the establishment of the Job Corps within the Office of Economic Opportunity and the expectations for the program. Then the program in operation is examined year by year.

The final chapter restates the need for a program such as the Job Corps and concludes that the reduction of the program was a result of inflated expectations, partisanship, hasty implementation, a bad press, reaction to riots, and a shift in objectives. It is suggested that inflated expectations were at the root of the other causes.

THE JOB CORPS

1964-1969

"Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?"

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

CHAPTER I

NEEDS

Sectioning the past into decades for discussion may be an artificial device, yet there are some periods that seem to lend themselves naturally to this sort of treatment. The fifties is such a period. With the kindly grandfather image of Dwight Eisenhower presiding in the White House, the "silent majority" dominated the American scene. This decade saw the gross national product jump from 258.1 billion dollars in 1949 to 482.7 billion dollars in 1959.[1] For the first time in our history white collar workers outnumbered blue collar workers[2] and, borrowing from John Kenneth Galbraith, Americans began to refer to themselves as "the affluent society."

Middle-aged middle-class Americans still remembered the depression of the thirties, but the prosperity they had

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[1] U.S., Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 139. _____ _____ Continuation to 1962 and Revisions (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 20.

[2] U.S., Department of Labor, Manpower Report of the President (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 212.

attained two decades later dimmed their perception. Conservative critics had argued that Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, implemented to combat the depression, was outside the realm of a capitalistic state. However, by the fifties, most Americans considered these reforms to be part of a more humane capitalism. This "enlightened capitalism" allowed considerable government intervention, regulation, and subsidization in order to provide a more secure way of life for the majority of Americans.[3]

The term "welfare state" has been used frequently by historians to describe the United States after the New Deal. Whether or not the welfare state was a radical departure from pre-depression policies has been the subject of considerable controversy. Certainly American concern for the poor was not an innovation of the thirties. Rapid industrialization and urbanization in the latter half of the nineteenth century created large masses of poverty-stricken workers in the cities who did not go unnoticed.[4] Numerous charitable societies, settlement houses, and other philanthropic organizations sprang up to cope with the problem. Efforts at first were confined to private groups, but by the turn of the century, local, state, and federal governments were very much involved.

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[3]Robert H. Bremner, From the Depths; the Discovery of Poverty in the United States (New York: New York University Press, 1956), p. 266.

[4]Ibid., p. 4.

Surveys by the state bureaus of labor statistics and the federal bureaus of Census and Labor graphically illustrated urban poverty.[5] Progressive measures at the beginning of the twentieth century did much to abolish the abuses of child labor and to establish fair standards for wages, hours, working conditions, and housing. Some historians see in these early reforms the beginning of the welfare state.[6]

Social legislation at the national level lapsed during the twenties, in part because, with increased prosperity, many Americans believed that the job had been done.[7] However, the depression at the end of the decade revealed the fallacy of this belief. Government responded to the crisis by continuing and expanding the reforms of the Progressive era. When the resources of local and state government were exhausted, the national government was called upon. Rapid implementation of welfare legislation during the early years of Franklin Roosevelt's administration seemed extreme to many conservatives, but the conditions that this legislation attempted to allay were also extreme. For the government to move in these areas was nothing new; it was only the degree and form which seemed novel. By the 1950's, the New Deal was a well established part of the system of government and, as in the twenties,

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[5] Ibid., p. 71-72.

[6] Ibid., p. 138.

[7] Ibid., p. 260.

many Americans thought that poverty was no longer a problem in this country.

Ironically, John Kenneth Galbraith, who had given Americans their boastful self-description, was one of the first to call attention to the large numbers of Americans who still did not share in the material prosperity of the nation. But the section of Galbraith's Affluent Society which discussed poverty in America was largely ignored in the fifties, and it was not until the sixties that poverty once again became an issue of concern. What actually served as the catalyst is difficult to say, but certainly works such as Michael Harrington's The Other America, Ben Bagdikian's The Poor in America, and Dwight MacDonald's "Our Invisible Poor" played a large part as did John Kennedy's presence in the White House.[8]

During the 1960 primaries Kennedy campaigned in West Virginia. The destitution that he found there made a lasting impression. Influenced by the works of Harrington and Galbraith, Kennedy's legislative programs included plans for assisting the nation's poor. In 1961, he signed the Area Redevelopment Act, which had been vetoed twice by President Eisenhower. The Manpower Development and Training Act and

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[8]Michael Harrington, The Other America (New York: MacMillan, 1962); Ben H. Bagdikian, The Poor in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); Dwight MacDonald, "Our Invisible Poor," New Yorker, Jan. 19, 1963, pp. 82-132.

an accelerated public works act were passed in 1962 with his support.[9] President Kennedy's brother, Robert, expressed a particular concern for youth in poverty areas and, at his urging, the President's Commission on Juvenile Delinquency was established to assist these young people.

However, the President recognized that these measures were inadequate. Area redevelopment funds were insufficient and failing to make a significant impact. The Manpower Development and Training Program had involved only 150,000 men in its first year of operation. A youth employment bill, supported by the administration since 1961, had failed to

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[9]The Area Redevelopment Act (PL 87-27) was a $394,000,000 program designed to aid severly depressed geographic areas of the nation. An Area Redevelopment Administrator was authorized to determine the location of economically depressed areas and to provide funds for loans to these areas. The Secretaries of Labor and Health, Education, and Welfare were authorized to establish vocational training programs for unemployed workers in these areas.
The purpose of the Manpower Development and Training Act (PL 87-415) was to determine the manpower needs of the nation and to train workers to meet these needs. The Secretary of Labor was authorized to enter into agreements with states, employers, trade associations and other groups to provide on-the-job training for workers. Funds were to be provided to pay workers while they were being trained by these agencies. Vocational education programs were also provided for under the direction of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. States were expected to contribute to the support of both the vocational and on-the-job training programs.
The Public Works Acceleration Act (PL 87-658), like the Area Redevelopment Act, was an attempt to aid economically depressed areas. The aid was to come in the form of public works projects which would create jobs and increase spending in these areas. In addition, needed public facilities would be built. The act authorized $900,000,000 for these purposes.

gain sufficient support for passage. The Kennedy legislative program being planned for 1964 included a massive attack on the roots of poverty.[10]

Robert Kennedy's concern with poverty among the young was shared by the President. Arthur Schlesinger, his special assistant, said that President Kennedy

> understood the power of a glittering society to tantalize and thwart the deprived young, to give them the world on a television screen and slam the door in their faces, to take people already confused by broken homes, overcrowded schools, hostile communities and fill them with such desperate resentment that, to affirm their own impalpable identities, they could not stop short of violence and murder.[11]

Two reports issued in 1963 pointed out the bleak prospects for these young people. Manpower and Training, Trends, Outlook, Programs, a Labor Department publication, discussed the unemployment problems of youth. Traditionally the young had a high unemployment rate. They "shopped around" trying to find the right job and they lacked seniority making them the first to be laid off. However, new circumstances in the sixties made the situation more alarming. The "war babies" were beginning to enter the labor market. This tremendous increase in the number of young people competing for jobs

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[10]Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days, John F. Kennedy in the White House (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), pp. 1005-1012.

[11]Ibid., p. 661.

was accompanied by a decline in the number of unskilled or semi-skilled positions available. These were important sources of jobs for young people just beginning to work. The study pointed out that, while the long-term unemployment rate had risen 50 per cent in the preceding five years for the entire labor force, the increase was 100 per cent for young people between the ages of 20 to 24. Nevertheless, the report argued that high unemployment rates for the young were not inevitable.

> In other free market economies such as Great Britain, the rate of unemployment for youngsters appears to be no higher than for adults. Intensive studies of foreign labor markets have shown that adequate programs for vocational guidance, training, and placement of youth can be keys to a lower unemployment rate.[12]

The Challenge of Jobless Youth, a study prepared by the President's Committee on Youth Employment, also observed that there were not enough unskilled and semi-skilled positions available to those competing for them. "If our current rate of unemployment persists, as the youth population increases, by 1970 the number of unemployed youths will be close to 1 1/2 million." The report stated that while unskilled jobs were declining, skilled positions were increasing.

> Jobs will rise by about 40 per cent for professional and technical workers, and 20 per cent for sales workers and for managers

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[12] U.S., Department of Labor, Manpower and Training, Trends, Outlook, Programs (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 9-10.

> and proprietors. At the same time, more education and training is now required. The average professional or technical worker now has more than 4 years of college; clerical workers have more than a high school education.[13]

Thus, one of the major unemployment problems faced in the early sixties was structural and an expanding economy could not be depended upon to cure it. Youth from poor backgrounds were the most severely affected.

Young people in poverty needed education and training if they were going to obtain the jobs that would bring them a decent living. Theoretically, the public schools provided them with the necessary education, and served as the great levelers, giving equal opportunities to all children. But in practice, of course, this was not the case. Children of poverty were at a disadvantage before they ever entered school. Their parents were often poorly educated, their homes crowded, their health poor. They brought these problems to schools that were woefully inadequate to handle them.[14] Yet the suburban schools, with problems far less difficult, received favored treatment. In 1961, James B. Conant noted that

> the expenditure per pupil in the wealthy suburban school is as high as $1000 per year. The

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[13]U.S., President's Committee on Youth Employment, The Challenge of Jobless Youth (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 2.

[14]Oscar Ornati, Poverty amid Affluence, a Report on a Research Project Carried out at the New School for Social Research (New York: 20th Century Fund, 1966), p. 66.

> expenditure in a big city school is less than half that amount...In the suburb there is likely to be a spacious modern school staffed by as many as 70 professionals per 1000 pupils; in the slum one finds a crowded, often dilapidated and unattractive school staffed by 40 or fewer professionals per 1000 pupils.[15]

The schools were failing these disadvantaged students, many of whom dropped out. A February 1963 report revealed that about one-half of the male dropouts studied left school for some "school-connected reason." Among those reasons were lack of interest in school, poor grades, and trouble with school authorities. Another one-fourth left for economic reasons. Two out of five of the dropouts were still living at home. Their annual family income was less than $3000.[16]

The educational system was not only failing on the elementary and secondary level. The President's Committee on Youth Employment disclosed that "nationally, less than half of those in the top third of their graduating class go on to graduate from college." These young people took positions "at less than their potential capacity," and narrowed the positions available for those with less ability.[17]

It may seem harsh to say that the educational system was failing when a Census Bureau monograph based on the 1960

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[15] James Bryant Conant, Slums and Suburbs, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961, p. 3.

[16] Vera C. Perrella and Forrest A. Boyan, "Out of School Youth, February 1963, Part 1," Monthly Labor Review, LXXXVII (November, 1964), pp. 1261-1262.

[17] President's Committee on Youth Employment, Challenge... p. 3.

census showed that the educational level of the nation had risen considerably since 1910. At that time one out of five 25 to 29 year olds had not completed the fifth grade. By 1960, this number had dropped to only one out of thirty-six. Of the entire population, twenty-four out of one hundred had less than five years of school in 1910 as compared to eight out of one hundred in 1960.[18] Yet in 1960, 40.1 per cent of the 18 to 24 year olds had not completed high school.[19] The Census Bureau report also mentioned that "the amount of education a person received influences in an important way whom he will marry, what kind of job he will obtain, how much money he will earn, how often he moves, and the educational chances of his children."[20] In 1960, 91.3 per cent of the professional and technical workers were high school graduates, and 74.5 per cent had one or more years of college. Only 17.2 per cent of the laborers had finished high school, with 2.8 per cent completing one or more years of college.[21]

Another Census Bureau study on income distribution indicated that educational attainment influenced earnings, even

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[18] U.S. Bureau of the Census, Education of the American Population (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 208.

[19] U.S., Congress, House, Education and Labor Committee, Youth Conservation Corps; Local Area Youth Employment Program, Hearings...on H.R. 1890...88th Congress, 1st session, 1963, p. 130.

[20] Census Bureau, Education..., p. 209.

[21] Ibid., p. 170.

for positions on the same level. For example, laborers with an elementary school education earned an average of $3,775 in 1959. If they had completed high school, their average earnings were $4,393. For college graduates, the average was $4,872.[22]

Not only was the high school dropout at a disadvantage from the standpoint of promotions and earnings, but also he appeared to have more difficulty in getting work. The unemployment rate of the youths who had not completed high school was 27 per cent, twice as high as the unemployment rate for graduates.[23]

Why did the high school graduates have a better employment and earning record? Was it because they had the benefit of increased education and training, or was it because the students were better motivated and self-disciplined to begin with? Or, were other factors involved? There is no single answer, but it is clear that there was a definite relationship between educational attainment and employment and earnings. By failing to meet the educational needs of the high school dropout, the public education system not only aggravated his educational deprivation, but also his social and economic deprivation.

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[22]U.S., Bureau of the Census, Income Distribution in the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 151.

[23]Perella, "Out of School Youth...," p. 1268.

A report released in 1964 by the President's Task Force on Manpower Conservation illustrated the extent of the problem. According to it, if all the 18 year olds in the nation were to be given the Armed Forces pre-induction examination, one-third would be found unqualified for military service. This figure was based on a "careful study of records of examinations for military service between August 1958 and June 1960, including examinations of enlistment applicants and draftees by Armed Forces examining stations, results of local board preliminary screening, and examinations of men who enrolled in reserve and National Guard units."[24]

The actual draft rejection figures were higher. One-half of those tested in 1962 failed to qualify. The report indicated that the majority of these rejectees were victims of circumstance.

> Although many persons are disqualified for defects that probably could not be avoided in the present state of knowledge, the majority appear to be victims of inadequate education and insufficient health services. A nation-wide survey, carried out by the task force, of persons who have recently failed the mental test, clearly demonstrates that a major proportion of these younger men are the products of poverty. They have inherited their situation from their parents and unless the cycle is broken, they will most surely transmit it to their children.[25]

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[24]U.S., President's Task Force on Manpower Conservation, One-third of a Nation: A Report on Young Men Found Unqualified for Military Service (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1964), p. 11.

[25]Ibid., p. 1.

Twenty per cent of the fathers or fathers-in-law with whom the rejectees lived were unemployed; over one-half of the fathers had not completed the eighth grade; 50 per cent of the families had incomes of less than $4,000 and one-half had incomes of less than $2,000.[26]

The survey revealed that 40 per cent of those turned down for mental deficiency never went beyond elementary school while four out of five did not complete high school. Within this same group, 31 per cent were unemployed and those that were employed had jobs that required little skill and paid low wages. The professionals from the United States Employment Service who interviewed the rejectees estimated that 80 per cent would be helped by job counseling and training.[27] It was also estimated that 75 per cent of those rejected for medical reasons would be helped by medical treatment.[28]

Having examined these facts, the President's Task Force on Manpower Conservation recommended that the President

> announce a nationwide manpower conservation program to provide persons who fail to meet the qualifications for military service with the needed education, training, health rehabilitation and related services that will enable them to become effective and self-supporting citizens.[29]

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[26] Ibid., p. 20.

[27] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[28] Ibid., p. 25.

[29] Ibid., p. 2.

Any discussion of deprived young people would be incomplete without mentioning the special problems facing black youths. The Brown decision in 1954 was considered a major civil rights turning point for blacks. Yet the nation had moved slowly in implementing that decision. In 1968, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders discussed the poor employment prospects for blacks:

> For decades, social, economic and psychological disadvantages surrounding the urban Negro poor have impaired their work capacities and opportunities. The result is a cycle of failure - the employment disabilities of one generation breed those of the next.[30]

This was coupled with "the related problem of the undesirable nature of many jobs open to Negroes. Negro workers are concentrated in the lowest skilled and lowest paying occupations."[31]

Among teenagers, the unemployment rate for blacks was twice as high as that of whites.[32] Non-white youths also made up the greater proportion of high school dropouts,[33] which, as discussed earlier, weakened their position in the labor market.

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[30] U.S., National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Report (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 126.

[31] Ibid., p. 126.

[32] President's Committee on Youth Employment, Challenge..., p. 2.

[33] Labor Department, Manpower and Training..., p. 10.

The earning power of blacks was considerably less than whites. In 1960, among 25 to 60 year olds, the average income for all groups was $5,847. The average for blacks, however, was $3,260.[34]

Whitney Young, executive director of the National Urban League, stated that a program was needed which would say to Negro youth

> that though you have faced barriers, discriminations and things that would have suggested that you are a nobody, you are really somebody. And though you have placed in front of you all the handicaps and obstacles; though you have been humiliated; and though they would suggest that you are a second-class citizen, you are really a first class human citizen.[35]

The grim prospects of disadvantaged young people, both black and white, which became so well documented in the sixties, made the necessity of a program of basic education and job training which would reach them obvious. The Job Corps was such a program.

There were other justifications for a program like the Job Corps that were motivated more by fear than social conscience. Arrests of persons under 18 years of age soared in the sixties, jumping from 477,262 in 1960 to 980,453 in 1969, an increase of 105.4 per cent. Total arrests for all

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[34]Census Bureau, Income..., p. 150.

[35]U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Education and Labor, Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Hearings... on H.R. 10440, 88th Congress, 2d session, 1964, p. 635.

ages rose only 24.1 per cent in the same time period. Individuals under 25 years of age accounted for 51 per cent of the arrests in 1969.[36] A study by Belton M. Fleisher published in 1966 suggested a definite relationship between high unemployment rates and high delinquency rates. Fleisher showed that age 16, which was the peak age for juvenile crimes in 1960, was also the age where youth unemployment and high school dropout rates were the highest.[37] In "Politics and Poverty," Michael Harrington warned that a "prosperity that leaves slums and ghettos standing and creates a desperate generation of uneducated youth will be threatened...by constant outbreaks of individual, nihilistic violence."[38] That the Job Corps was already established by the time of the riots in Watts and those that followed elsewhere does not mean that this sort of program was not an important part of the solution. Indeed, in 1968, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders recommended "a comprehensive manpower policy" which would include "careful evaluation of the individual's vocational skills, potentials and needs" and "referral to one or more programs of basic education,

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[36] U.S., Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports for the United States, 1969 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1970), pp. 33, 110.

[37] Belton M. Fleisher, The Economics of Delinquency (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966), pp. 81-82.

[38] Michael Harrington, "The Politics of Poverty," in Poverty: Views from the Left, ed. by Jeremy Larner and Irving Howe (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1968), p. 29.

job training, and needed medical, social, and other services."[39]

The typical rioter presented in the Commission's report was a potential Job Corps candidate:

> The most compelling and difficult challenge is presented by some 500,000 'hard-core' unemployed who live within the central cities, lack a basic education, work not at all or only from time to time, and are unable to cope with the problems of holding and performing a job. A substantial part of this group is Negro, male and between the ages of 18 and 25. Members of this group are often among the initial participants in civil disorders.[40]

In Detroit 61.3 per cent of the rioters were between the ages of 15 and 24. While 93 per cent of the rioters studied had finished elementary school, the majority had not completed high school. Unemployment was extremely high, and those that were employed tended to hold unskilled jobs.[41]

Not only were many Americans concerned about crime and violence among the poor, but also they worried about the monetary cost to society of the unemployed. In a speech before the Public Relations Society of America in March 1964, Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz expressed this fear statistically. He spoke of an "outlaw pack" of young people numbering more than 350,000 who had ceased to look for work.

> They are unemployed today and will be for the rest of their lives at a cost to us of $1,000

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[39] National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Report, p. 232.

[40] Ibid., p. 231.

[41] Ibid., pp. 75-76.

> a head a year for the rest of their lives... For $1,000 to $3,000 we can pull a boy or girl back. We can get poverty, unemployment and ignorance out of the nation's bloodstream...[42]

For the defense contractor, a program such as the Job Corps had other economic advantages. Many of them saw job training and education for the disadvantaged as a new area of development, a market to ease into as their traditional market declined.[43]

While there were several employment programs that offered job counseling and basic education as well as job training, the Job Corps was unique in that it also provided a change of environment. The President's Committee on Youth Employment had shown the need for such a change.

> Many of the unemployed youth live in congested city areas, surrounded by social disorganization, poverty and despair. Their families usually occupy most inadequate housing. They are surrounded by other disadvantaged people, many of whom are unemployed or intermittently employed at low wages. Without successful examples among their elders to guide them, the youth of such families are unlikely to succeed.[44]

James Conant made a similar observation in Slums and Suburbs.

> If there is no inherent difference in potential ability, and if educational opportunity is equal, the poor achievement of the children in both the Negro and white slums...may be ascribed to their depressing cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.[45]

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[42] New York Times, March 19, 1964.

[43] Vernon R. Alden, "Planning for Education's Forgotten Men," Saturday Review, XLVIII (May 15, 1965), p. 85.

[44] President's Committee on Youth Employment, Challenge..., p. 4.

[45] Conant, Slums..., p. 30.

According to Willard Wirtz, it was necessary to get these young people away from their old environment of frustration in order to "break the pattern."[46]

The sixties, as contrasted with the fifties, saw a much larger portion of America expressing concern for the nation's poor. The youth of America were singled out for special consideration. A number of government studies carried out in the early sixties made it clear that the employment outlook for young people, especially those from poverty backgrounds, was bleak. If these young people were black, the situation was even worse.

The public education system was not able to reach teenagers who so desperately needed education and training. Many of these youngsters were rejected by the selective service for mental and physical defects that lessened their chances for obtaining a good job and providing themselves with a decent living situation.

Increased crime, riots, and swelling welfare rolls were manifestations of this poverty within the midst of affluence. Many young people, frustrated by a society that held up a good job as the measure of success and then denied its possibility to them, ceased to hope for better things. A program was needed to restore their faith in themselves and

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[46]"Youth Corps Bill Gets Fresh Start...New Version of New Deal's CCC," Business Week, March 30, 1963, p. 80.

in the possibility of a better life. Basic to this was a change of environment, a move from the frustrating circumstances of failure that surrounded them.

Such a program was well within the established areas of public concern. The nation's poor and unemployed had found champions as early as the nineteenth century. The legislative record of the twentieth century was filled with bursts of reform aimed at assisting these individuals who were not achieving the promises of the American way of life. The country had experienced almost a century of sporadic war against poverty. Never had so many had so much as in the fifties. When confronted with the plight of the poor still in their midst at the end of the decade, it was not surprising that their concern found legislative expression.

"We had known from the outset that our legislation would have a hard time making it through the House of Representatives. Many Republicans would oppose the bill out of habit, as they opposed all progressive social legislation. Their opposition could be expected to be particularly strong in an election year. It was also clear that Republican opponents of the bill would try to enlist the aid of Southern Democrats by stirring the Southerners' fears that certain provisions would enforce integration."

Lyndon Baines Johnson
discussing the Economic
Opportunity Act

CHAPTER II

POLITICS

The Job Corps idea had roots in the Civilian Conservation Corps of the New Deal. The CCC was established in the thirties to provide employment for many of the young men out of work as a result of the depression. The enrollees lived in camps which housed about 200 and they received clothing, medical and dental care for themselves, and financial assistance for their families. Enrollment was for a period of six months and could be extended for as long as two years.[1] A basic education program was provided but corpsmen were not required to participate in this.[2] In return for these benefits, members of the corps were required to perform conservation work.

For the most part, the record of the CCC was quite good, with 60 per cent of the enrollees moving from their old environment to better positions after their service in the CCC.[3] Moreover, the corpsmen performed some much needed

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[1]"This Month's Feature: Administration's Youth Employment Bill," Congressional Digest, XLII (December 1968), p. 292.

[2]U.S., Department of the Interior, CCC (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1938), p. 42.

[3]"Youth Corps Bill Gets Fresh Start...New Version of New Deal's CCC," Business Week, March 30, 1963, p. 79.

conservation work, and, after the program's dissolution in 1942, conservationists began a steady campaign to have a similar program re-established.[4]

American politicians drew upon the experience of the Civilian Conservation Corps in setting up the Job Corps. But the parallel breaks down in several strategic spots. First, the CCC was established in the midst of a severe depression. It aimed at providing work for the temporarily unemployed including many high school and college graduates. A report on the CCC issued by the Interior Department in 1938 said that

> These were young men reared in the belief that the opportunity for success by honest effort was the birthright of every American citizen. As a group they were young, ambitious, and eager... The worst danger was that many of them would become so embittered and discouraged they would never be able to rehabilitate themselves...[5]

The Job Corps, on the other hand, was born during prosperous times and aimed at reaching the high school dropout and the hard-core unemployed. These were young people with little faith in the "birthright of every American citizen." Many of them were already "embittered and discouraged" so the work that the Job Corps cut out for itself was far more difficult than that of the CCC.

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[4]Christopher Weeks, Job Corps: Dollars and Dropouts (Boston: Little, 1967), p. 24.

[5]Interior Department, CCC, pp. 1-2.

The Job Corps considered basic education to be one of its major goals. But for the CCC, the education program was considered, at best, a secondary undertaking. The Interior Department's final report on the Civilian Conservation Corps states that "the Corps drifted gradually from job training to a school type of education for which neither the camp nor a large proportion of the enrollees was equipped."[6] Thus, the Job Corps task was not only more difficult, but also it was primarily a new program, requiring careful study, preparation, and innovation in order to successfully achieve its goal of rehabilitating young people trapped in the poverty cycle.

Following a recommendation of the Joint Committee on Reduction of Non-Essential Federal Expenditures, Congress abolished the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1942. In 1950, measures were introduced in both the House and Senate to re-establish the CCC. However, no action was taken at this time. The Korean War directed the nation's attention elsewhere and it was not until the late fifties that a similar conservation camp measure was re-introduced. Senator Hubert Humphrey introduced the measure in 1957 and continued to sponsor similar bills through 1963. In 1959 and 1960 the bill passed the Senate but was stalled in the House Rules Committee.[7]

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[6]U.S., Department of the Interior, Civilian Conservation Corps Program of the United States Department of the Interior, March 1933 to June 30, 1943 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944), p. 3.

[7]"Admin. Youth Employ. Bill," Congressional Digest, December 1968, p. 296.

The Eisenhower administration was not receptive to the idea of another conservation corps because of its cost[8] and it was not until Kennedy was in the White House that the program received the support of the chief executive. The Kennedy administration program emphasized youth employment rather than conservation and included not only a youth conservation corps, but also public service employment training and on-the-job training. The plan was sent to the Congress in 1961. Humphrey introduced the measure in the Senate and Carl Perkins (D-Kentucky) introduced it in the House. The bills were referred to committees and no further action was taken that year.[9] In 1962 the section dealing with on-the-job training was incorporated into the Manpower Development and Training Act and dropped from the Youth Employment bill. Because of the House's earlier hostility to conservation camp bills, the Senate delayed action on the Youth Employment Bill pending House action. Once again the measure was held in the House Rules Committee.[10]

Humphrey re-introduced the bill in the new Congress which began in 1963. The program was approved by the Senate on April 10, 1963, but the victory had not been an easy one.

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[8]Congressional Quarterly Service, Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1959 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1960), p. 67.

[9]CQ Almanac, 1961, p. 283.

[10]CQ Almanac, 1962, p. 228.

Opponents of the bill said that the conservation corps would not provide work experience useful in a "technological age." Senator Kenneth Keating (R-New York) had attempted to remedy this with an amendment requiring each enrollee to participate in 10 hours of vocational training a week. Still, the major work emphasis was in conservation. Once again the bill could not get beyond the House Rules Committee.[11]

The assassination of President Kennedy at the end of 1963 placed Lyndon Johnson in the White House. Although favoring youth employment measures, he adopted a different strategy for getting the bill passed. In March 1964, his administration sent an omnibus poverty bill to the Congress which included a provision for a youth conservation corps. This conservation corps was a part of the broader residential training program known as the Job Corps. The Job Corps proposal provided not only for training centers where young men would perform conservation work and take part in a basic education program, but also it included training centers which emphasized the teaching of urban job skills.

From the beginning the bill was plagued by complaints that the administration was attempting to put the program into action before it had been approved by Congress. In March 1964, shortly after the measure had been introduced in Congress, several planners for the economic opportunity

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[11] CQ Almanac, 1963, p. 514.

program were announced by the administration. Sargent Shriver, who had been designated to direct the program was called upon to answer charges that these appointments were premature since Congress had not yet acted upon the program. Shriver explained that these individuals, by planning key parts of the program, would be in a good position to answer the questions of Congress. He stated that no part of the program would be put into action before being approved by Congress.[12]

Advanced planning was essential if the program was to be put into effect immediately upon passage, and if there were to be results to show Congress at the end of the first year of operation. Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, testifying before the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee, stated that "already five bureaus have plans for 170 camps in 35 states. We are in the process of refining data to achieve the objective of having 20,000 enrollees in camps in the first year. Many camps can be activated to receive trainees within 30 days of enactment of this legislation."[13]

Women had not been included in the original plans, but during committee hearings Representative Edith Green (D-Oregon) led an attack on this omission and by May succeeded in having them a permanent part of the proposed measure.[14]

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[12] New York Times, March 26, 1964.

[13] U.S., Congress, Senate, Labor and Public Welfare Committee, Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Hearings... on S. 2642...88th Congress, 2d session, 1964, p. 53.

[14] New York Times, May 7, 1964.

In June, Dr. Jeanne Nobel, an associate professor at New York University's Center for Human Relations Studies, was asked to formulate plans for a Women's Job Corps.[15] She began her duties by planning for a July conference of experts in education and job training to discuss the Women's Centers.[16]

Other preliminary plans included negotiations with industrial concerns about directing some of the Job Corps centers. According to Christopher Weeks, who served as the first deputy director of the Job Corps, John Rubel, Vice-President of Litton Industries, had suggested that business be responsible for some of the centers.[17] However, Dr. Vernon Alden, Ohio University President, who had been charged with developing plans for the Job Corps,[18] thought that universities and other educational institutions should handle the centers. Rubel suggested that several methods be tried including centers run by universities, those run directly by the Federal government, and others run by business. Then these centers could be evaluated and the best type could be determined.[19]

The extent of the preliminary plans for the Economic Opportunity program was a source for much criticism. Yet,

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[15] Ibid., June 12, 1964.

[16] Weeks, Job Corps..., p. 155.

[17] Ibid., p. 97.

[18] New York Times, March 26, 1964.

[19] Weeks, Job Corps..., p. 102.

in spite of this, the preliminary plans were woefully inadequate. According to Christopher Weeks, the Job Corps was the victim of insufficient funds for office space, supplies, staff, travel, and research. What staff there was, was spread out and there was a lack of coordination among them.[20] Dr. Alden set up volunteer task forces at Ohio, Peabody, Rutgers, and Columbia to assist in planning for the Corps. He believed that he would acquire the help of the most talented people if he used them on a part-time basis, allowing them to continue at their regular full-time jobs.[21]

Alden continued as President of the University of Ohio. While it was certainly desirable to recruit the most talented people to plan for the Job Corps, it was also necessary that these people be in a position to devote an adequate amount of time toward planning for the program. People with full-time commitments elsewhere were not in such a position.

The entire anti-poverty measure had strong opposition, especially from the members of the Republican Party. The New York Times reported that Senators Barry Goldwater and John Tower, two conservative southwesterners, believed "the poverty measure was being forced through Congress with undue haste as an election-year vehicle for Mr. Johnson."[22]

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[20] Ibid., pp. 102-106.

[21] New York Times, May 3, 1964.

[22] Ibid., July 8, 1964.

Republican Representative Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, who led his party's fight against the bill, predicted that there would be "a serious contest for power."[23] Senator Jacob Javits of New York charged that Title I of the bill, which provided for the Job Corps, was a duplication of effort since two Senate bills with similar provisions were still pending in the House.[24] He did not mention the possibility that these two bills were likely to suffer a fate similar to their predecessors in the House Rules Committee.[25]

Although major opposition to the bill came from Republicans, southern Democrats were also a strong force with which to contend. In anticipation of this, Representative Phil Landrum of Georgia was chosen by the administration to maneuver the bill through the House. His primary speech in support of the economic opportunity bill presented it in

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[23] Ibid., March 20, 1964.

[24] U.S., Senate, EO Act of 1964, Hearings..., 1964, p. 63.

[25] The House Rules Committee is responsible for establishing the agenda of the House and determining the length of debate for bills. By the late thirties committee control had fallen into the hands of conservative Democrats and Republicans and they succeeded in blocking many liberal bills by simply not establishing a rule for them. In 1961 the membership of the Rules Committee was expanded from 12 to 15 members in an attempt to break the Committee's stranglehold on liberal legislation. This enlargement allowed two more Democrats to be appointed to the Committee, and Democratic leadership made certain that the appointees were pro-administration. This shifted the balance from conservatives to liberals by a slim one vote margin. However, the chairmanship of the Committee was still in the hands of conservative Howard W. Smith (D-Virginia), and since he determined when the committee would meet, the Committee's expansion was not that significant.

conservative tones. He called it the "most conservative social program I have ever seen presented to any legislative body." He spoke of the "social dynamite" with which the nation had to deal and he talked of turning "taxeaters" into "taxpayers."[26] His speech was received with a standing ovation in the House,[27] but that was not an indication of clear support. The bill was still in trouble.

The Republicans were aware that southern Democrats held the key to passage or rejection of the Economic Opportunity Act. When Republicans on the House Education and Labor Committee urged that the Committee include a clause banning racial discrimination in the Job Corps, they may have been attempting to undermine Landrum's efforts to rally southern support. Landrum had consistently ignored or played down the racial question. Asked by Congressman Howard Smith of Virginia if the camps would be fully integrated, he said "Negroes do not constitute all the poor people in the world. The fact that these camps would be fully integrated is a matter of law over which /neither/ you nor I have been able to prevail."[28] Adam Clayton Powell of New York, the black

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[26] U.S., Congress, House, Representative Landrum speaking for the Economic Opportunity Act, 88th Congress, 2d session, August 5, 1964, Congressional Record, CX, pp. 18206-18209.

[27] Eric F. Goldman, The Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 185.

[28] New York Times, June 17, 1964.

chairman of the Committee, justified a vote against the amendment by stating that it would weaken the battle for the Civil Rights Bill currently pending in Congress. The Committee rejected the ban, voting strictly along party lines.[29] To allay southern fears about racially mixed Job Corps Camps, governors were given the right to veto the establishment of centers in their state.[30]

One of the major objections to the Economic Opportunity Act raised by the Republicans was the creation of a separate agency to handle the program. Senator John Tower of Texas complained that this provided for a "Federal poverty czar, who would have absolute authority to use public funds for political purposes.... and perhaps having the power to intrude into the affairs of the departments and agencies." Also, it seemed to him that "state and local governments would be by-passed."[31]

Republicans on the House Education and Labor Committee agreed with Senator Tower. They attempted to shift the program from the proposed Economic Opportunity Office to an established government agency such as the Labor Department or the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Democrats objected. According to President Lyndon Johnson,

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[29] Ibid., May 14, 1964.

[30] Weeks, Job Corps..., p. 122.

[31] U.S., Congress, Senate, Senator Tower speaking against the Economic Opportunity Act, 88th Congress, 2d session, July 22, 1964, Congressional Record, CX, p. 16614.

this alternative had been considered and rejected in the initial planning stages. While handling the program through established agencies might help to "launch" the program "with speed and efficiency," there was also the danger that the program would be lost in the departments. Walter Heller, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, and Kermit Gordon, Director of the Budget Bureau, urged the President to push "for a new and independent agency which, they maintained, would be far more likely to move along new paths of innovation and experimentation."[32] The Democrats on the House committee supported the President's position, and the Republican proposal was defeated.[33]

Many Republicans also agreed with Senator Tower's objection to the lack of state control over the Office of Economic Opportunity. Senator Javits proposed an amendment that would require the OEO Director to "establish procedures which shall facilitate effective participation of the states... and /to/ utilize state agencies and facilities...whenever and wherever practicable." Javits believed that this would "chart a middle course between those who would have us prohibit the program from entering a state unless that state agrees and takes it over, and those who would have us agree

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[32]Lyndon Baines Johnson, The Vantage Point; Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969 (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), p. 76.

[33]New York Times, May 13, 1964.

that the administrator shall conduct it from Washington, enlisting the states only as he might consider desirable."[34]

But the Javits amendment was rejected. Many Democrats appeared to believe that the states had not done the job in the past, and were, thus, not likely to do it in the future. Representative John Braedemas (D-Indiana) summed up the feelings of many of his Democratic colleagues in Congress when he spoke before the House Committee on Education and Labor.

> I think we can all run the flag of States rights up, but if nobody is around to salute it and pay the bill, then we are still going to have the crime and juvenile delinquency and illiterate 16-year-old young men in the northern part of the country as well as in the south.[35]

The independence of the Economic Opportunity Office was not the only source of controversy. Senator Tower complained that the proposed anti-poverty program used "business as a whipping boy and scapegoat," and would not "let the free enterprise system work."[36] Republican Senator George Aiken of Vermont answered these conservative criticisms.

> Does this bill provide a handout? The answer to that question is Yes, it provides a handout to the poor people of America, and probably would not have been approved by Capt. John Smith or any of those who believe that poor people's misfortunes are the results of their own misdoings. But

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[34]U.S., Congress, Senate, Senator Javits speaking for an amendment to the Ecomonic Opportunity Act, 88th Congress, 2d session, July 22, 1964, Congressional Record, CX, p. 16624.

[35]U.S., Congress, House, Education and Labor Committee, Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Hearings...on H. R. 10440... 88th Congress, 2d session, 1964, p. 874.

[36]Senator Tower, Congressional Record, p. 16614.

compared to other handouts, this bill is not even a flea bite. It is nothing compared to the handouts being given to the big business interests of the United States every day and every year.

It is nothing at all compared to the depletion allowance which is given to the oil and gas industry.

It is nothing at all compared to the tax benefits which are given to the public utilities of this country.

It is almost nothing at all compared to the benefits which, as a government, we bestow upon investment bankers who have invested billions of dollars in the foreign field, much of which is under guarantee so that they cannot lose.

This is a small handout compared to that which the shipping industries have received over the years.

It is an infinitesimal handout compared to what some of those who get big Government contracts enjoy, with the cost-plus arrangements, et cetera, amounting to billions of dollars a year.

It is not a very large handout compared to that which the publications of this country, many of whom will oppose this bill with all the vigor at their command, receive in the form of reduced postage rates.

It is terribly small compared to the $11 billion benefits which were bestowed largely upon the well-to-do people of this country by the tax bill of 1964 and which will not be shared by any of those who qualify under this so-called poverty program.

And it is not much more than the recent handout which was given late last spring to the cotton mills of this country in the form of a subsidy for cotton which they purchase....

The question arises, Are these poor people a threat to the successful business interests of America or to the liberty of our people? I contend that they are not. I should like to know why a handout to a billion dollar industry is a great boon to America, while a handout to a poor family in need is a menace to our liberty.

> In my opinion, regardless of the political implications, it is only fair to give consideration and help to the people who are most in need.[37]

One of the unfortunate consequences of the political maneuverings to get the bill passed was the sacrifice of a very talented and conscientious leader, Adam Yarmolinsky. Yarmolinsky was among the key early planners for the economic opportunity program and in line for the position of deputy director of the Office of Economic Opportunity when the program was established.[38] Yarmolinsky was not a popular man in the South. He was a member of the Defense Department staff and in this capacity had helped to establish and implement the recommendations of a commission to investigate racial discrimination in the Armed Forces.[39] Many southerners held him personally responsible for orders which closed segregated facilities to military personnel.[40]

In August 1964, just prior to the bill's passage, a memo written by Yarmolinsky fell into unfriendly hands. The memo was interpreted to mean that funds were already being used to establish Job Corps Centers before the Economic

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[37] U.S., Congress, Senate, Senator Aiken speaking for anti-poverty legislation, 88th Congress, 2d session, July 22, 1964, Congressional Record, CX p. 16616.

[38] "War on Poverty: the First Shots," Newsweek, LXIV (December 14, 1964), p. 76.

[39] Goldman, Tragedy..., p. 187.

[40] Weeks, Job Corps..., p. 17.

Opportunity Act had been approved although this was not actually stated in the memo.[41] When Shriver and Speaker of the House John McCormick met with the North Carolina delegation to win their votes for the bill, the North Carolinians demanded that Yarmolinsky not receive a post with the new program. According to White House aide Eric Goldman, Shriver hesitated, but the issue was forced and Yarmolinsky was dropped. On the seventh of August, Congressman Landrum assured his colleagues from the floor of Congress that Yarmolinsky would not have a position with the new program.[42]

After passage in the House on August 8th, the Economic Opportunity Act was cleared for the President's signature. The bill had been approved by the Senate on July 23rd. Only 22 of 177 Republicans in the House had voted for the bill. The measure, however, was carried by 41 votes. The 7 "yea" votes of the North Carolina delegation, for which the administration had sacrificed Adam Yarmolinsky, had not been needed.[43]

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[41] U.S., Congress, House, Memo from Adam Yarmolinsky reprinted in House proceedings, 88th Congress, 2d session, August 6, 1964, Congressional Record, CX, p. 18335.

[42] U.S., Congress, House, Representative Landrum speaking on Adam Yarmolinsky, 88th Congress, 2d session, August 7, 1964, Congressional Record, CX, p. 18582.

[43] New York Times, August 21, 1964.
U.S., Congress, House, Vote on Economic Opportunity Act, 88th Congress, 2d session, August 8, 1964, Congressional Record, CX, p. 18634.

On Saturday, August 15th, five days before the act was signed by the President, the administration committed a tactical error. Earlier that month Shriver had sent Johnson a list of proposed conservation center sites. Governors, Congressmen, and Senators who would be affected had not yet been contacted and the list was not ready to be made public. Shriver was alone at his office Saturday when he received a call from President Johnson's office. The President wanted to announce the list at a press conference that afternoon. Shriver balked believing it would be a diplomatic blunder since local officials had not yet been contacted. Shortly afterwards, he received a second call telling him that the President was in the process of giving the list to the press. Shriver summoned what aid he could and began calling local officials. It was difficult to make contact on Saturday afternoon, however, and the damage had been done.[44]

President Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act on August 20, 1964. Part A of Title I provided for the Job Corps. The purpose of the program was to

> prepare for the responsibilities of citizenship and to increase the employability of young men and young women aged sixteen through twenty-one by providing them in rural and urban residential centers with education, vocational training, useful work experience, including work directed toward the conservation of natural resources, and other appropriate activities.[45]

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[44]Weeks, Job Corps..., pp. 165-167.

[45]Economic Opportunity Act, Statutes at Large, LXXVIII, 508 (1964).

The Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity was authorized to make agreements with government agencies and private organizations to establish the centers. He was also authorized to arrange for the education and training programs at the centers, to establish the health, safety and conduct standards, and to set the rules for selection and termination. Enrollees were required to take an oath of allegiance to the United States and sign affidavits attesting to their loyalty. In addition to the food, clothing and shelter received by each enrollee, they also earned $50 a month for each month of satisfactory performance in the Corps. This money was to be paid to them when they left the Corps. However, $25 of it along with a matching $25 from OEO could be sent each month to the enrollee's family. Plans for each center were to be submitted to the Governor of the state in which the center was to be located. Governors were allowed thirty days to veto the extablishment of the center. Forty per cent of the centers were to be involved in conservation work. The original plans allowed for the slower, less skilled enrollees to be assigned to the conservation centers. These corpsmen could then move to urban centers upon graduation.

The Economic Opportunity Act was the first piece of major legislation to originate in the Johnson administration, although, as we have discussed, many of its roots were in earlier administrations. The act had been approved in an election year and a bitter, partisan fight, with the Job

Corps being one of the most controversial issues, had preceded its passage. The program would be extremely difficult to implement successfully and preliminary plans for its implementation had suffered from a lack of resources and coordination. Yet the administration began its "war against poverty" with what seemed to be a promise of immediate victory.

"To every man, his chance.

To every man, regardless of his birth, his shining golden opportunity.

To every man the right to live, to work, to be himself, and to become whatever his manhood and his vision can combine to make him.

This, seeker, is the promise of America."

Lyndon Johnson quoting Thomas Wolfe at the dedication of the Gary Job Corps Center, April 10, 1965.

CHAPTER III

EXPECTATIONS

The rhetoric with which the Job Corps was established was full of old school Americanisms. The first annual report of the Office of Economic Opportunity is reminiscent of "peace in our time" phrases from an earlier era, only this time it is full-time prosperity in our time. About the Job Corps it said:

> We can record the number of teenagers who enter Job Corps Centers, but there is no place on a graph to indicate precisely what that training and education will mean to them as wage-earners and useful, full-time members of society... During its opening months, the War on Poverty has taught us that these intangible achievements are often as important as direct results. Because of the intangibles - coupled with chartable results - we know that poverty in the United States will be abolished in our time.[1]

Certainly these results were desirable, but it was naive and unrealistic to claim that they were inevitable and it set standards for the program that were greatly exaggerated.

Initially, corporate response to the Job Corps was quite favorable. Many firms were anxious to get into the field of programmed education as a partial substitute for

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[1]U.S., Office of Economic Opportunity, A Nation Aroused, 1st Annual Report, 1965 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 7.

the declining defense market. The Job Corps program would help them to train semi-skilled workers that they needed at no cost, and perhaps at a profit, for them. In addition, it gave them an opportunity to experiment with new training techniques and equipment.[2]

In an interview with Banking, Otis Singletary, the first director of the Job Corps, discussed the prime standard by which he thought the centers would, and apparently should, be measured.

> Right now, today, there are hundreds of thousands of jobs going begging in this country, at the same time that there are hundreds of thousands of youngsters in this age group who are out of work and who cannot fill those jobs because they do not have the requisite skills. If I had to distill the purpose, the mission, the goal of the Job Corps down into one sentence, I would say this: It is our aim to take those kids and get them ready for those jobs. And in the final analysis, the success or failure of our program is going to depend on that.[3]

Yet, job placement was not a major part of the Job Corps program. It aimed at training "those kids" but not at matching them up with "those jobs." Singletary's measure of success seems to have left out a crucial element.

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[2]"It's D-Day for War on Poverty," Business Week, November 28, 1964, p. 126.
"Poverty War Draws Business Best," Business Week, December 19, 1964, p. 24.

[3]Otis Singletary, "The Job Corps: Its Purpose, Its Beginnings, Its Success," Banking, LVIII (January 1966), p. 107.

Young people responded in overwhelming numbers to the program's initial recruitment efforts. On February 8, 1965, the Office of Economic Opportunity reported that over 100,000 applications had been received. They were arriving then at a rate of approximately 6,000 per day.[4]

An article in the Reporter in March 1965 described one of the recruitment films.

> The screen showed a pleasant camp in the California mountains, a light snow on the ground, the slender trees bare. 'This could be the kind of break you've been looking for' a voice said...The filmstrip... showed them...working with power tools, doing forestry work, examining data-processing equipment - and more besides. It showed food - dinner trays piled high (three biscuits along the side) and breakfast trays as generously laden...It showed money - a close up of the dollar bills placed in an outstretched hand for daily spending money, the mother at her mailbox examining her monthly check. And it showed fun - the swimming hole, the ball game, the weekend trip to town.[5]

It failed to show the difficulty many corpsmen had in adjusting to the new environment. The friction that existed between urban and rural enrollees, or black and white enrollees was not presented. What was expected of the corpsmen, what he could expect after the program - these were not discussed. Prospective enrollees applied for admission to a utopia. The reality was a disappointment to many of them.

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[4] New York Times, February 9, 1965.

[5] Barbara Carter, "Can the Job Corps Do the Job?" Reporter, XXXII (March 25, 1965), p. 21.

The Job Corps staff recognized that their task would not be an easy one. An article in the Office of Education's American Education in May 1965 stated that "the function of the Job Corps is to make competent, employable citizens out of incompetent, unemployable kids." It went on to state that the staff expected "to measure progress more in inches than in miles."[6] The first annual report of the Economic Opportunity Office stated that

> not all of the enrollees are staying until they graduate. But this was not unexpected. Most started with a background of economic hardship and educational failure, home and neighborhood problems. The adjustment was just too difficult for some of them.[7]

Also the corps staff was realistic enough to realize that training for skills marketable today was not enough, and, according to Vernon Alden, they aimed at sharpening "the mind and the body so that the enrollees can cope with changes imposed by a rapidly changing world."[8]

There were, however, obvious problems with which the Job Corps program did not realistically deal. Among them was a crucial one pointed out by Michael Harrington in an article that appeared in the New York Times Magazine while

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[6]L. E. Mathis, "Be Somebody: Catoctin Job Corps Conservation Center, Maryland", American Education, I (May 1965), pp. 28-31.

[7]OEO, Nation Aroused..., p. 24.

[8]Vernon R. Alden, "Planning for Education's Forgotten Men", Saturday Review, XLVIII (May 15, 1965), p. 86.

the Job Corps program was still being considered by Congress. While much attention was being given to the problem of training and educating jobless youth, it was not being done realistically, bearing in mind what jobs would be needed in the future. He pointed out that we had no adequate mechanism for determining job needs of the future. He went on to state that

> unless the basic problem of full employment is met, the administration's camp program could become a cruel deception; having attracted, motivated, and trained young people, it would turn them out two years later into an economy which still could not employ them.[9]

Singletary thought that the success of the program rested on turning out well-skilled graduates. Vernon Alden said that they also aimed at sharpening their minds and bodies to cope with change. But what if the corpsmen passed all these tests, and there was still no job? The labor market could not automatically absorb them all and this was a crucial problem that the government had largely ignored.

An essay published in 1968 dealt with this problem.

> Many of those involved in drawing up the OEO legislation had a very peculiar view of poverty. They believed essentially that the problem of poverty was that of a culture: it was necessary to change the practices of individuals, and then the economy would be prepared to receive them. Consequently, the legislative emphasis was upon rehabilitation, social services, and training... Undoubtedly, some of the poor do suffer from a lack of motivation and psychological difficulties,

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[9]Michael Harrington, "The New Lost Generation: Jobless Youth," New York Times Magazine, May 24, 1964, p. 70.

> but to argue that the problem is mainly one of motivation is misleading. Rehabilitation and training without assurance of some return at the end of the line is a dangerous political game... the combination of high expectations and incoherent programs could only produce controversy, difficulty, and dismay.[10]

Thus the program only went halfway, if that far. It aimed at preparing young people for jobs with little consideration of whether those jobs actually existed.

The OEO staff also failed to come to grips with the realities of time. They expected to put this extremely complex program into operation on a nationwide scale in a very short period of time. They wanted to produce impressive results for the next Congressional appropriations. By doing this they actually weakened their position for their haste resulted in a great deal of waste, inefficiency, and inadequacy.

Much was expected of the Job Corps program. Its enemies demanded that it justify its existence, while its supporters predicted successes on a grand scale. Such expectations for a program as complex and full of problems as the Job Corps, in retrospect, seems more foolhardy than naive.

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[10] S. M. Miller and Pamela Roby, "The War on Poverty Reconsidered," in Poverty: Views from the Left, ed. by Jeremy Larner and Irving Howe (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1968), pp. 70-71.

"Wishing so many things so, we all too readily come to think them not only possible which they very likely are, but also near at hand, which is seldom the case. We constantly underestimate difficulties, overpromise results, and avoid any evidence of incompatibility and conflict, thus repeatedly creating the conditions of failure out of a desperate desire for success."

Daniel Moynihan

CHAPTER IV

REALITIES

The Job Corps continued to be a controversial issue after its establishment. The program had been in effect only ten days when objection to the selection of Job Corps Center sites began. On August 31, 1964, George Emery, Assistant Superintendent of the Colonial National Historic Park in Yorktown, Virginia, announced that a camp was planned for his community. The release from his office was somewhat defensive which seems to indicate that opposition was expected:

> Those selected will not be juvenile delinquents. They will not be criminals. They will not be mentally retarded or mentally disturbed. The visits by the men to local communities will be supervised. In most cases, they will be visiting in small groups and will be accompanied by their VISTA counselors. They will not be driving their own cars...The Job Corps trainees will not be used in positions that would otherwise be filled by local work forces.[1]

It was estimated that the Job Corps would add about $15,000 a month to the local economy.[2]

The James City County Board of Supervisors immediately petitioned the governor to veto the camp site. Four out of

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[1] The Daily Press (Newport News, Virginia), September 1, 1964.

[2] Ibid.

the five board members in York County also opposed the camp.[3] On September 2d, York County Board members met with an assistant of Sargent Shriver in the Washington office of local Congressman Thomas Downing. The Office of Economic Opportunity agreed to postpone action to give local residents time to consider the center. On September 3rd, Board Chairman E. S. Bingley announced that an official hearing would be held on September 16th at York High School and that Job Corps officials would attend to explain the OEO position. Following his announcement, he was presented with sixteen petitions containing more than 400 names of people opposed to the camp.[4]

An editorial in the local newspaper said that opposition was based on

> the make-up of the camp's members, ostensibly a mixture of races and nationalities from northern cities...Since the Poverty Program was destined to take some of this population off the welfare rolls and put them on the federal poverty rolls, there is every indication that most of those eligible for Job Corps jobs may turn out to be indolent, lazy, trifling young people who have already learned that Uncle Sam will pay them for doing almost nothing.
>
> Another source of enrollees would come from the delinquent population of these northern cities where idle delinquents have found that the easy way to get a bottle of liquor or to pick up a transistor radio is to organize a gang and smash store windows for looting and vandalism.[5]

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., September 4, 1964.

[5] Ibid.

The fears were not purely racial, but that appeared to be one of the major causes for concern. Dr. Frank Knox, York County Board member, expressed a traditional racial fear when he stated that the Corpsmen would want to date local girls.[6]

The York County Civic Association, a local black organization, supported the establishment of the camp at Yorktown,[7] but white opposition was too strong. By September 15th, Bingley had received a letter from Shriver stating that there was no urgency about establishing a center in Yorktown. The public meeting scheduled for the next evening was postponed.[8] Governor Harrison never received a request for approval of the center.

The administration had anticipated southern opposition to integrated camps and accordingly had not proposed any centers in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, or South Carolina.[9] They had apparently misread the sentiments of many Virginians, and their failure to confer with local officials prior to announcing the York County site led to some unfortunate publicity.

The South was not the only region to object to integrated centers, however. A proposed center just outside of Bismarck,

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[6] Ibid., September 7, 1964.

[7] Ibid., September 11, 1964.

[8] Ibid., September 15, 1964.

[9] Congressional Quarterly Service, Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1964 (Washington. D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1965), p. 210.

North Dakota upset many of the residents of that town. According to the New York Times, "the most explosive issue" was that "75 of the 200 trainees would be Negroes." The town of 32,000 had no Negro residents. Some attempted to justify their opposition saying that it was not caused by racial prejudice, but by a concern for the Negro enrollees who would have no contact with Negro families, etc. However, the Farmers Liberty League was mailing copies of a segregationist newspaper to residents of Bismarck that, among other things, contained articles comparing Negroes with apes.[10]

In some cases, opposition to the establishment of Job Corps centers rested on economic grounds. Residents of New Rochelle, New York coveted the island that had housed Ft. Slocum and were dismayed when the government considered it as a possible camp site. The town wanted the area for an industrial park.[11]

Once the sites were selected, and development of them begun, the Job Corps was faced with the tremendous task of transporting enrollees from their homes to the centers. At first, little attention was given to sending the young men to a camp near their home. The task was complicated by the fact that many of these youths were confused by the public transportation system. They did not know how to change flights

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[10] New York Times, December 15, 1965.

[11] Ibid., December 1, 1965.

and could not read their tickets; thus it was necessary to establish a clearinghouse that they could call for assistance. By June of 1965 the Job Corps was planning, with the assistance of a computer, transportation for 2,000 young people a week.[12]

Initial examinations after the enrollees had arrived at the center turned up numerous medical and dental problems that had to be corrected. Robert Collier of Big Stone Gap, Virginia was typical of many corpsmen. Soon after arrival he had to have 14 teeth extracted. A Time reporter asked him when he had last been to the dentist. "I ain't never been" he answered.[13]

The education program at the centers was geared to the individual's particular needs. A series of tests given upon entrance revealed the enrollee's reading level, aptitude, and interests. The centers relied heavily on programmed instruction which could be carried out by the student at his own speed rather than traditional teaching methods directed towards a group. In addition to basic education and job training, the total education program included instruction in the "mechanics of society." In an article in Saturday Review, Vernon Alden discussed the importance of this.

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[12] Ibid., June 4, 1965.

[13] "My Neighbor Needs Me," Time, LXXXV (March 5, 1965), p. 21.

> cannot gain employment if he does not know how to complete an application blank. He cannot take advantage of distant job opportunities if he does not know how to use transportation. His life is complicated, not simplified, by his inability to use a bank, send a telegram, read a road map, make a long-distance phone call, buy insurance, plan a budget, or fill out forms... The Corps will therefore give the enrollees an understanding of simple procedures, concepts, and forms he must know to function effectively on the job and in his personal activities.[14]

The Job Corps based its selection of training programs on figures supplied by the Bureau of Labor Statistics which indicated areas where there was a demand for workers.[15] By the end of the first year, a job placement program was being developed under the direction of Lewis D. Eigen, an associate director of the Job Corps. Businesses were being encouraged to list openings with regional Economic Opportunity Offices. Eigen planned to use a computer to match graduates with openings.[16]

The first Job Corps center, Catoctin in Maryland, began operation on January 15, 1964. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman predicted quick success at the dedication ceremonies on February 27, 1965:

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[14] Vernon R. Alden, "Planning for Education's Forgotten Men," Saturday Review, XLVIII (May 15, 1965), p. 86.

[15] U.S., Office of Economic Opportunity, The First Step on a Long Journey: Congressional Presentation, April 1, 1965, Office of Economic Opportunity (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 20.

[16] "Shape-up Starts for Job Corps Grads," Business Week, November 6, 1965, p. 33.

> Within a short time, there will be praise for the Job Corps Centers...The American people will be quick to see that the centers can build - through the help of our Job Corpsmen themselves - our human and natural resources.[17]

President Johnson visited Catoctin in March shortly after its dedication. His news conference the following week illustrated the type of publicity that the Job Corps was receiving:

> Q. I understand that there has been quite a bit of violence in the youth camp, youth corps camps, Job Corps, that involved knifing and there's been one or more deaths as a result of that. Is that the reason you visited the camp in Maryland last week, to build the morale up in the camp and give the public confidence?"

Johnson denied that this was the reason for his visit but he did express regret over "any accidents or any violence or any injuries that may occur at any time."[18]

Job Corps publicity went from bad to worse. In June the first of a series of incidents involving Camp Atterbury in Columbus, Indiana was reported in the New York Times. Seven corpsmen were arrested on sex charges.[19] The local press reported on the camp unfavorably, and by August, twelve staff members had been asked to resign.[20] In October

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[17] New York Times, February 28, 1965.

[18] Ibid., March 14, 1965.

[19] Ibid., June 12, 1965.

[20] Ibid., August 25, 1965.

an article written by one of these staff members appeared in the National Review. Don E. Cope said he and the others discharged with him were scapegoats for the bad publicity that the center was receiving. According to Cope, there were 450 enrollees when he arrived at the center and there were more than 450 on the staff. Fewer than 70 of these staff members worked directly with the enrollees, leaving about 380 to administer. He discussed the lack of discipline at Atterbury, the theft, the fights, and the inadequacies of the training program. He supported the story of H. C. Brown of the Indianapolis News which claimed that a protection racket existed at the center. Corpsmen were required to pay to an established gang or face the consequences. He compared recruiters who were receiving $80 per enrollee to "bounty hunters."[21] The article was another blow to an already battered image.

While the Office of Economic Opportunity did not publicly admit to all these charges, it did admit that Atterbury was not properly managed. In its defense, however, it stated:

> The Job Corps is a new and largely experimental program, and it is common knowledge that there was no reserve of expertise in running such a national residential program for poor youth at its inception. Only by experience have we ascertained that some of the contractors selected to

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[21] D. E. Cope, "It's What's Happening Baby; Camp Atterbury Job Corps Center near Columbus, Indiana," National Review, XVII (October 19, 1965), pp. 930-932.

> operate the Urban Centers were incapable, for various reasons, of effectively doing the job they contracted to do. The development at Atterbury is a classic illustration of this. The Midwest Education Foundation's contract for Atterbury was not renewed.[22]

In June, soon after the first stories about Atterbury hit the newspapers, the women's center in St Petersburg, Florida became a source of attention and controversy. The school board voted to end its contract with the center, giving as its reasons

> excessive salaries paid to Job Corps Staff Members; complaints of residents, mostly elderly retired persons, living in the vicinity of the center; a staff of 130 persons for the anticipated 280 to 300 girls, resulting in a ratio of nearly one instructor for every two girls; rental paid for the hotel for an 18 month period equivalent to the assessed valuation of the hotel for tax purposes.[23]

In July, the city council also asked that the center be moved as soon as possible.[24] In answer to the criticisms Job Corps staff members stated that the student staff ratio was necessary to reach school dropouts and prepare them for "solid jobs" and "useful lives." Their budget, they argued was in keeping with the budgets of the other women's centers that had not received such criticisms. The rent amounted to approximately $1.42 per girl per day. Since the rate as a hotel had been $18 a day it did not seem exorbitant to staff

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[22] U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Public Welfare, Amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Hearings...on S. 3164...S. 2908...S. 3139, 89th Congress, 2d session, 1966, p. 564.

[23] New York Times, June 24, 1965.

[24] Ibid., July 2, 1965.

members. The St. Petersburg Chief of Police was quoted as saying that the complaints about "rowdyness" appeared unfounded. "We've assigned two men to the center permanently at night because of the rumors but we've had no real problems.[25] After a meeting with Job Corps officials from Washington and St. Petersburg, the Pinellas County school board decided to honor its 18 month contract with the Job Corps.[26] However, the center's troubles had received a great deal of publicity and the school board's decision could hardly be counted as a victory for the program.

On June 24, 1965, the day that the first reports of trouble at the St. Petersburg Center appeared in the New York Times, an article also discussed an incident at the Tongue Point Job Corps Center in Astoria, Oregon. Governor Mark Hatfield asked for additional security forces for what he termed "a potentially dangerous situation." The trouble apparently started when white corpsmen "used disparaging language" to black corpsmen.[27] Fifteen youths were sent home because of the incident.[28]

A month later, two Job Corps youths from a center in Delaware were arrested in Texas. The two, who were reported to be traveling to Mexico, were charged with burglarizing a

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[25]Ibid., July 11, 1965.

[26]Ibid., July 25, 1965.

[27]Ibid., June 24, 1965.

[28]Ibid., July 4, 1965.

store in Artesia Wells and stealing a car in Laredo.[29]

Also in July, five corpsmen from the Gary Center outside of Austin, Texas were charged with shooting two airmen.[30] In November, trouble broke out again. A group of youths from the center attempted to crash a dance at the Austin YWCA. Fighting broke out and a corpsman was fatally wounded.[31]

The incident that received the most publicity in 1965 was at the Breckinridge Center in Kentucky. On August 20 a riot broke out in the cafeteria and spread to the security building where windows were broken and scuffling with staff members took place. It is difficult to say just how many were involved in the rioting. First reports in the New York Times said "hundreds rioted."[32] By the next day, the estimate was down to between 80 and 150 and some said no more than 50. The camp was run by Southern Illinois University. Dr. Mac Vicar, Vice President in charge of education at Southern Illinois, was quoted as saying "We're not ready and we know we're not for efficient handling of Job Corps training." Shriver said steps would be taken to improve the situation at Breckinridge.[33] Many students fled from the camp when the rioting broke out and, on August 22, Job Corps

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[29]Ibid., July 24, 1965.

[30]Ibid., July 22, 1965.

[31]Ibid., November 28, 1965.

[32]Ibid., August 21, 1965.

[33]Ibid., August 22, 1965.

officials began searching motels and hotels near the camp to locate the corpsmen and return them to the center.[34] By the 23rd, all but thirty had been returned to Breckinridge and classes were resumed. Thirteen corpsmen were discharged because of their actions during the riot.[35] According to the New York Times, the student grievances which led to the riot were inadequate training programs, pass restrictions, poor food, uncomfortable quarters, abuse by guards, and misleading information given to the enrollees by recruiters. In addition to this, there were rumors about a protection racket similar to the one at Atterbury.[36]

Shortly after the Breckinridge incident Singletary issued a statement defending the Job Corps program.

> The Job Corps is not in the business of recruiting angels...there isn't much happening in this program that we didn't think was going to happen. The Breckinridge fight made every paper in the country. On the same day in Winslow, Arizona, our first welding class graduated. Forty-eight completed a ten-week course. Twelve of them got jobs at over $2 an hour. There was no mention of that anywhere.[37]

Shriver made a similar statement in November. He expressed concern but not surprise over the incidents. He said they were expected in a program dealing with "school

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[34] Ibid., August 23, 1965.

[35] Ibid., August 24, 1965.

[36] Ibid., August 25, 1965.

[37] Ibid.

dropouts" and "potential delinquents." He stressed the fact that most of the 74 centers then in operation had not had trouble.[38]

In October a Job Corps survey team was sent to Breckinridge. The group determined that little had been done to remedy the situation which resulted in the August riot. The Washington office decided not to send any more corpsmen to Breckinridge until certain conditions were corrected. Wray Smith, associate director in charge of urban centers, said that Breckinridge was deficient in three areas: instructional services, administrative services, and student life. Southern Illinois was charged with being too "slow and cautious" in purchasing equipment and constructing facilities. Staff training, a crucial element for a successful program, had been eliminated because enrollees were arriving at such a rapid rate that there was no time for the staff training program.[39]

The Office of Economic Opportunity later decided that Southern Illinois was not capable of managing the Breckinridge Center. Once again they mentioned the "experimental nature" of the program and stated that

> there is no reason to conclude from the 20 August 1965 incident, in which 50 corpsmen were involved, that the center could not, if effectively managed,

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[38]Ibid., November 25, 1965.

[39]Ibid., November 3, 1965.

> develop the capacity to function in the desired way. It rather appears that it was a lack of ready facilities for educational and vocational training and an inability on the contractor's part to furnish enough equipment, clothing, or business management to support the program that resulted in the demoralization of both the staff and the Corpsmen and in general disorganization and inefficacy of program at the center. It is to the Job Corps' credit that it recognized the problem and has taken steps to resolve it.

When Southern Illinois' contract expired, Graflex Corporation assumed management of Breckinridge.[40]

The situation at Breckinridge pointed out some major problems of the Job Corps program during its first year of operation. Officials attempted too much too soon. Enrollees, who were promised an idyllic period in the Job Corps followed by a happily-ever-after existence, sometimes arrived at camps that were ill-prepared to feed, house and train them. Gangs, similar to the ones in their home neighborhoods, formed and the change of environment proved merely to be a geographic change. Incidents at the camps, although isolated, were the subject of much unfavorable publicity.

There were exceptions to this unfavorable publicity, however. The camps run by profit-making corporations not only seemed free from attack during most of the first year, but also they were the source of favorable comments in the press.[41] Sargent Shriver commented on this when testifying

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[40] Congress, Senate, Public Welfare Committee, Amends. to EOA, Hearings..., 89-2, p. 559.

[41] New York Times, November 3, 1965.

before the House Education and Labor Committee in September 1965. The business corporations, he said

> know how to run things. They are good managers. They know what kind of employees they need. They train people in realities...Take Camp Kilmer. The management knows what a body repair shop is. It has had experience. There is no play acting. School is in their /corpsmen's/ minds an artificial thing. This is the real thing.[42]

Although Kilmer's management was advised by Rutgers University, the actual responsibility rested with Federal Electric Corporation. In June 1965, an article in the New York Times discussed the success of Kilmer. The dropout rate was reported to be only nine per cent, which was one-half the national average. A form of student government had been established to determine penalties for misconduct. Racial friction, which troubled some of the other centers, was not a problem at Kilmer.[43] In July, Camp Kilmer was featured in a special on WNBC-TV in New York. The program, entitled "Light Across the Shadow," treated Kilmer sympathetically.[44] Kilmer had turned into the model Job Corps Center.

Consultants from Rutgers were not so pleased with conditions at the camp, however. In November they released a report that was extremely critical. According to the New York Times, the report condemned

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[42] Ibid., September 6, 1965.

[43] Ibid., June 27, 1965.

[44] Ibid., July 7, 1965.

> authoritarian, paramilitary methods used by the administrative staff to achieve behavior control, preoccupation with a 'good front,' little learning, high absenteeism, crowding, physical violence and inadequate recreational facilities...a tendency to view corpsmen as culprits and degrade them in their own estimation, disproportionate concern with punitive measures, a failure to understand the nature and 'life styles' of a poverty culture, secrecy, surveillance and frustrated, angry teachers and group leaders.[45]

In an interview with U.S. News and World Report in December, one of the Rutgers professors indicated that it was not just Kilmer that he objected to, but the Job Corps idea in general.

> I would prefer that camps not be set up - period! I would prefer that the Job Corps use existing educational facilities and create new ones within the area where the youngsters live.[46]

It is not surprising that those involved in the established educational system would feel compelled to defend it, and offer it as the proper source for educating the school dropouts. But obviously it had already lost these young people. New facilities in the area were part of the solution, but programs such as the Neighborhood Youth Corps worked from this aspect. The Job Corps was unique because of its residential character. It aimed, through changing the environment of these young people, to give them hope for a better life and then to teach them how to act on this hope. If, as

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[45] Ibid., November 17, 1965.

[46] "Troubles in the Job Corps - Report from a Showplace," United States News and World Report, LIX (December 27, 1965), pp. 54-55.

the Rutgers report stated, the environment of the enrollees was not being significantly altered, then that was the real problem. Local non-residential centers were no substitute.

The validity of the Rutgers report is insignificant when measuring the damage that it did to the Job Corps image. This was the camp that had served as a model center. Because the camp had received so much good publicity, it was only natural that unfavorable comments about it should also receive full coverage.

News stories about the Job Corps program during its first full year of operation were devastating. But these incidents that received so much publicity were not typical of the Job Corps centers as a whole. By the end of the first full year there were ninety-two centers in operation.[47] Only four centers, Atterbury, St. Petersburg, Breckinridge, and Kilmer, were the subject of lengthy controversies. While some corpsmen had been arrested, their arrest rate was below the national average. Of the 30,687 who had entered the program by the end of the first year, only 3.3 per cent had been arrested. This was 0.3 per cent below the national average for all ages. The national average arrest rate for individuals in the same age group was actually higher, 4.6 per cent. Most offenses for which they were arrested were

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[47] U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Education and Labor, 1966 Amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Hearings... 89th Congress, 2d session, 1966, p. 879.

minor, with only 0.14 per cent being jailed. The average number of days jailed was seventeen.[48]

The unfavorable news stories about the Job Corps did not severely affect its position in Congress in 1965. Although Republicans continued their strong campaign against the Economic Opportunity program, there were fewer of them than in 1964. Northern Democrats had picked up quite a few seats in the 1964 elections. These gains left the administration somewhat freer of southern Democrats also. The anti-poverty program was extended through 1968. Although Job Corps enrollees were still required to take a loyalty oath, they no longer had to sign an affidavit pledging their loyalty. While the Governor's veto was subjected to the OEO director's approval in the Community Action, work-study, and adult education programs, it remained intact over the Job Corps program. In response to the "bounty-hunter" charge leveled against recruiters, OEO was prohibited from paying individuals and groups for referral of names to the Job Corps. The requirement that forty per cent of the enrollees be engaged in conservation work was limited to males only. The 1965 amendments also required that the OEO Director establish regulations to prevent the Job Corps program from displacing employed workers. Funds allowed the Job Corps program were increased for the coming year. Funds obligated for 1965 amounted to $183 million. In 1966, $235 million was

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[48]Ibid., p. 1022.

appropriated for the Job Corps program.[49]

The first full year of Job Corps operations was filled with both successes and failures. The program had gotten off to a rapid start and this rapidity led to numerous problems. The program was innovative and experimental and mistakes were to be expected. The haste with which the program was implemented increased the potential for error, yet ninety-two centers were established in the first year with only a handful being singled out for major criticisms.

Corpsmen got in trouble and each incident was given full play by the news media, yet there were amazingly few incidents when one considers the overall picture. The enrollees were young people from hard core poverty areas where the crime rate was high, yet the arrest rate for enrollees was below the national average.

There was still much to learn about operating the centers, but ninety-two were functioning, experimenting, and learning. One of the enrollees who ran away and then returned to the Catoctin Center may have aptly summed up the first year's operations -- "I hate this lousy place, but it's better than the lousy place I came from."[50]

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[49]Congressional Quarterly Service, Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1965 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1966), pp. 405-406.

[50]"My Neighbor Needs Me," Time, LXXV (March 5, 1965), p. 21

"There have been reform committees of fifty, of sixty, of seventy, of one hundred and all sorts of numbers that started out to do up the regular political organizations. They were mornin' glories - looked lovely in the mornin' and withered up in a short time..."

Plunkitt of Tammany Hall

CHAPTER V

RESPONSES

News stories of isolated incidents at Job Corps centers continued to plague the Job Corps program during its second year of operation. February saw new trouble at the St. Petersburg center. The school board voted to drop its Job Corps contract. This time there appeared to be little trace of the animosity that had been present in 1965. Board members said that the center's program was worthwhile, but it was more than the school board could handle.[1] However, when the Job Corps made plans to move the center to another hotel in St. Petersburg with a new contractor, the city's desire to be rid of the center became obvious. The city council authorized the mayor to take steps to prevent the relocation.[2] Governor Haydon Burns of Florida said that, because of St. Petersburg's reaction to the proposed site, he would veto the center.[3] OEO had no choice and announced that it would close the center because of local opposition.[4]

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[1] New York Times, February 24, 1966.

[2] Ibid., May 6, 1966.

[3] Ibid., May 7, 1966.

[4] Ibid., May 14, 1966.

It appeared that the Office of Economic Opportunity had blundered in locating a Job Corps center, with the natural accompanying activity and noise, in the heart of a retirement community. OEO claimed that the fault was not theirs:

> The Job Corps went to St. Petersburg due to an enthusiastic invitation by Mayor Herman Goldner and the Pinellas County Board of Public Instruction...That invitation was first extended in November, 1964, and thereafter repeated constantly.
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> The center site was chosen, as is the normal practice, except for a review by Job Corps representative, by the contractor. It was expected that the Pinellas County Board would know - more intimately than outsiders - the city of St. Petersburg and its residents.

While community hostility closed the center, the program was not a failure. "Many young women, who could not possibly have 'made it' without their Job Corps training, benefited greatly from their experience."[5]

Community relations proved to be a problem in New Bedford, Massachusetts also. There was friction between local youth and corpsmen at the Rodman Job Corps Center. In May, the city council asked President Johnson to move the center from their town. This followed a fight between enrollees and town youths during which corpsmen hurled rocks at police who tried to break up the fight. Center director Jerome Ziegler said only a small per cent of the corpsmen were involved in the fight. He said the fight came after a series

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[5]U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, Amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Hearings...on S.3164, S.2908, S.3139, 89th Congress, 2d session, 1966, p. 561.

of attacks on corpsmen by local young people. He assured the community that the leaders of the fight had been disciplined.[6] Shriver responded to the council's request saying he had "no intention" of moving the center.[7] According to OEO,

> The Rodman situation arose partly as a result of the center administration's inability at the time to have established a healthy relationship with the New Bedford community.

But OEO officials thought the community was at fault too because "the community itself" did not 'go to the lengths necessary to meet the Rodman Job Corps Center to work out their mutual problems."[8] An intensive campaign was begun to improve relations between the town and the center. A new director was appointed and in December the council gave the center's new director a vote of confidence.[9]

Camp Kilmer had received little publicity since the Rutgers report was released in 1965. In June of 1966, the center made the newspapers again. Motorists complained to police of being stoned when driving by the center. One resident was struck in the face by a corpsman. Seven corpsmen were expelled as a result of the incident. Kilmer's student government condemned the stoning and issued an

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[6]New York Times, May 24, 1966.

[7]Ibid., May 25, 1966.

[8]Congress, Senate, Labor and Public Welfare Committee, Amds. to EOA, 1964, Hearings..., 1966, p. 562.

[9]New York Times, June 18, 1967.

apology to the community.[10] Two days after this incident four corpsmen were arrested for setting fire to several buildings at the camp.[11] Residents petitioned the Edison Town Council to ask that the center be removed from their community. Kilmer responded by promising to tighten discipline. The mayors of Edison and Piscataway received letters explaining how this would be done. Included in the steps to be taken were: additional lighting and fences on highway running by center, a corpsmen patrol to oversee the group, greater care in issuing passes into town, emergency phone numbers for residents to use to reach officials quickly, program to improve corpsmen's attitudes to police, and buses to take corpsmen to town so that they would not use public transportation.[12]

An excerpt from a letter of the Edison Chief of Police to the Job Corps director in March 1967 indicated that relations were good. "The Job Corps has been a good neighbor to Edison and we hope that it will be an encouragement to our youth in completing their education."[13]

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[10] Ibid., June 16, 1966.

[11] Ibid., June 18, 1966.

[12] Ibid., July 3, 1966.

[13] U.S., Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Education and Labor, Economic Opportunity Act Amendments of 1967, Hearings...on H.R. 8311, 90th Congress, 1st session, 1967, p. 556.

Corpsmen got in trouble at the McCook Center in Nebraska[14] and the Custer Center in Michigan.[15] These stories were also picked up by the media. But by the end of the second year, there were more than 100 centers. Those making headlines were only a small portion of the centers in operation.

The Job Corps discipline was not the only source of criticism during the program's second year of operation, however. In March Senator Everett Dirksen proposed that a committee be set up to investigate the "mass creation of extravagant Job Corps Centers." He claimed that the expenditure per enrollee was $7,800, "almost twice the cost of sending a boy to college."[16]

Determining just what was the actual cost per enrollee turned out to be an impossible task. Shriver testified before the House Appropriations Committee in September 1965 that the cost per man per year was $6,000. Edith Green charged that it was actually close to twice that much or $11,251 per enrollee in 1965. This figure, she said, included capital outlays for equipment, buildings, etc., but they had been stretched out over a period of years so the figure was not inflated.[17]

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[14] New York Times, March 29, 1966.

[15] Ibid., March 31, 1966.
Ibid., April 1, 1966.
Ibid., August 1, 1966.

[16] Ibid., March 4, 1966.

[17] Ibid., March 11, 1966.

Part of the difficulty appeared to rest with clarifying terms. In Shriver's presentation to the House Education and Labor Committee in March 1966, he gave two sets of figures. The average cost per enrollee was $7,500. He projected that this would be down to $6,150 by December 1967. However, the average enrollee stayed only nine months. This called for another figure - the cost of keeping one man in the Job Corps for a year. Shriver's statistics showed this cost to be $8,200.[18]

Mrs. Green asked Shriver how he could justify spending so much money for so few young people. According to her figures the program was reaching

> 15 girls out of every 5,000 who really need some kind of help and...190 boys out of every 5,000 who are eligible...could you justify the expenditure of an average of $9,000 on a few people and an expenditure in the public school system, nationwide, of $484 per student.

Shriver responded that

> If this were the only program we were running for this age group, I would agree with you. The Neighborhood Youth Corps, however, is for the same age group...The Work Study program is for the same age group...

Mrs. Green also complained because there were 18,768 men enrolled in the Job Corps program and only 1,519 women. Shriver agreed

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[18] U.S., Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Education and Labor, 1966 Amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, Hearings... 89th Congress, 2d session, 1966, p. 574.

> that we need to have more programs which do reach this age group of girls and would welcome, as I have said many times before, before this committee and others, specific suggestions of how that could be accomplished. Right now, for example, we are in negotiations with the Women In Community Service to try and develop some new ways of getting at these girls.[19]

Charges of extravagance were followed by charges of political payoffs. Republican Representatives Albert Quie of Minnesota and Charles Goodell of New York accused the Office of Economic Opportunity of awarding a Job Corps contract to a Democratic Party supporter as a reward for his support. William C. Hobbs, Senior Vice President of Consolidated American Services, Inc., had given $2,000 to the President's Club and to the Democratic National Committee. Goodell and Quie said that four Washington services had been ignored while Consolidated American set up a Washington office in order to receive the contract. OEO said that the four Washington offices had been considered and turned down because they could not handle all the work required. The Economic Opportunity Office, according to Milton Fogelman, contracts division head, did not know of Hobbs's party contributions.[20]

Not all the news out of the Job Corps centers was bad. In response to criticisms, the Job Corps agreed to place enrollees closer to their homes.[21] Thousands of enrollees

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[19] Ibid., p. 582.

[20] New York Times, August 12, 1966.

[21] Ibid., June 14, 1966.

received sorely needed medical and dental attention. The educational program was innovative[22] and the average gain within the first five months of the program was 1.7 grades in reading and 2.6 grades in mathematics.[23] Public school systems recognized that there was much to learn from the educational techniques of the Job Corps. Four public school systems sent 24 teachers and counselors to work with the Job

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[22]The Job Corps not only provided a unique opportunity for experimenting with educational programs to salvage school dropouts, but also required that this be done. The emphasis was on individualized instruction and counseling. Enrollees were tested upon entering the program in the basic areas of instruction. Then a course of study was planned for each corpsman based on his particular needs, interests, and abilities. Students moved forward at their own pace. Success was emphasized, not failure.
While some of the education materials that they used were selected from commercially published sources, many programs were developed especially for the Job Corps. This was necessary because of the lack of satisfactory remedial education works. These materials were much in demand and during the first year that they were made available to the public, more than 2,000 school systems purchased them. In 1967-68, twenty-one school systems tested the Job Corps' reading and mathematics courses with their slow students and found that these students raised their reading level one grade in only forty-two hours and, their math level in only thirty-six hours. The Job Corps programs in reading, mathematics, and language skills are being used widely by public schools throughout the nation today.
Many of the ideas which the Job Corps incorporated into its special education program were not new, but they had not been worked out in detail or used on such a large scale. The Job Corps gave some much needed impetus to remedial education in the United States. For further details see Joan Williams, "Schools Study Job Corps Lessons," Manpower, II (March 1970), pp. 22-25.

[23]U.S., Office of Economic Opportunity, The Quiet Revolution /2d annual report/ (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967), pp. 18-19.

Corps program for a year. The idea behind this project was that they would take back the "innovative methods" of the Job Corps to their own school systems.[24]

At Atterbury, Corpsmen raised $122 to assist a woman with ten children in nearby Indianapolis whose home was destroyed by fire. They took on the renovation of a home in Franklin which was to be used to train retarded children. In Columbus, they prepared a public recreation area. At Breckinridge, Corpsmen raised $58.40 for crippled children. Women from the Cleveland center collected $375 for the March of Dimes. At the Gary Center, Corpsmen participated in a Jaycee sponsored Christmas shopping trip for orphans. Dismayed that the orphans bought only necessities, corpsmen raised $350 to purchase additional gifts for them. Corpsmen from Tongue Point spent evenings cleaning the YMCA. They also built a special walker for a youth with cerebral palsey. They took it on themselves to raise the $21 needed for the wheels.[25] These events did not get national news coverage however.

An article on Camp Kilmer in the New Yorker pointed out the sort of thing many centers were doing to improve community relations. Corpsmen assisted in the community United Fund Drive. On their own, they established a

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[24] New York Times, June 13, 1966.

[25] U.S., Office of Economic Opportunity, Job Corpsmen and Women Assist Neighboring Communities (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1966) pp. 2-6.

recreation program for underprivileged children in New Brunswick. The community was responsive to the corps too. One hundred families in the area invited corpsmen home for Easter. A local playhouse began providing free tickets for enrollees.[26]

According to the second annual report of the Office of Economic Opportunity, nearly 3,000 young people had been graduated from the Job Corps by the end of 1966. The largest portion, 70 per cent, were employed in positions averaging $1.68 an hour; 21 per cent were in the Armed Forces; 9 per cent had returned to school.[27]

Congress was keenly aware of the criticisms of the Job Corps program, however, and the Economic Opportunity Act amendments of 1966 reflect this awareness. Signed into law on November 8, 1966, the amendments required that 1) women must make up at least 23 per cent of the enrollment by July 1, 1967; 2) no more than 45,000 could be enrolled in the centers; 3) centers in operation for nine months or more could not spend more than $7,500 per enrollee; 4) Job Corps officials must work towards smoothing community relations and involving youths in community life; 5) enrollees must be assigned to the closest center that would meet their needs; 6) the director must receive from each enrollee who completed the

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[26] John Bainbridge, "Reporter at Large; the Job Corps," New Yorker, XLII (May 21, 1966), pp. 142-145.

[27] OEO, Quiet Revolution, p. 19.

program, 6 and 18 months after completion, statements giving his residence, employment status, compensation and other relevant follow-up data; 7) standards of conduct must be established for the corps and "stringently enforced"; 8) demonstration centers must be established on both residential and non-residential bases and the director was directed to report on these centers to Congress by March 1, 1968.[28] For the first time funds were "earmarked" by Congress for the various programs. The Job Corps, along with the controversial community action program, received smaller amounts than requested by the administration while more popular programs such as Head Start and the Neighborhood Youth Corps were given more than requested.[29] Although the program was highly criticized during Congressional deliberations, it was extended until 1970.

Isolated incidents continued to mar the reputation of the Job Corps during its second year of operation. These soon shared the spotlight with charges of extravagance. While the program was expensive, it was unfair to compare it, as many did, with the cost of a college education. The program was new and its formative years would be the most expensive. It provided not only education and training, but also

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[28] Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1966, Statutes at Large, LXXX, 1451-1454 (1966).

[29] Congressional Quarterly Service, Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1966 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1967), p. 250.

food, clothing, shelter, and a salary which could be sent to a corpsman's family. In addition to the valuable public works projects that corpsmen performed, the government would benefit if their training removed them and their families from welfare rolls and turned them into productive citizens.

The Job Corps was responsive to its mistakes and to its critics. But these were only piecemeal evaluations. Thorough and objective appraisals were in order.

"It is much safer to keep in step with the parade of opinion than to try to keep up with the swifter movement of events."

Walter Lippmann

CHAPTER VI

EVALUATIONS

In 1967 two groups released reports evaluating the overall performance of the Job Corps Program. The Office of Economic Opportunity commissioned Louis Harris and Associates to carry out one of the studies. The second review was prepared by the United States Chamber of Commerce.

The Harris work was based on a series of surveys of those who had been accepted into the Job Corps program. The most useful of these examinations for evaluating the effect of the Job Corps program on its enrollees was a study of those leaving the program in August 1966. The youths observed included not only graduates of the program, but also dropouts and dismissals. They were interviewed in February 1967 and the three groups were compared with regard to pre-Job Corps experience, Job Corps experience, and post-Job Corps experience.

The study revealed that, of the three groups, Job Corps graduates had the best employment record after their training. Five per cent more of the graduates were employed in February 1967 than had been employed prior to entering the Job Corps. The number of dropouts employed, however, had dropped to four per cent below their pre-Job Corps employment record and dismissals were one per cent below their earlier position. The

Harris report observed that

> While most of the shifts are not large and, in total, there has been no significant shift, it is clear that the graduates and those in the Job Corps for the longest time have been able to improve their situation while the dropouts and those in for a short period of time have lost ground.[1]

The graduates had the greatest increase in hourly earnings. Their median hourly rate was up 34¢ from its pre-Job Corps level while the rate for dropouts was up only 21¢ and for dismissals, 20¢. The Harris report concluded that

> longer stays in the centers and completion of a training course have clearly helped the graduates. Compared with dropouts and discharges, they are working more, more likely to be using their Job Corps training and, as a result, have had a larger increase in pay rate.[2]

More than half of the August 1966 terminations, working when interviewed, were reported to believe that they had good opportunities for promotion. There was little difference between the three groups on this point. The report explained that

> the question of advancement possibilities elicits the hopes of the corpsmen at least as much as it does a rational appraisal of their situation. It is not surprising, then, that there is little

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[1]Louis Harris and Associates, A Study of August 1966 Terminations from the Job Corps (Washington: Louis Harris and Associates, 1967), pp. 65-66, 73-74 in U.S., Congress, House of Representatives, Economic Opportunity Act Amendments of 1967, Hearings...H.R. 8311, 90th Congress, 1st session, 1967, part 1.

[2]Ibid., pp. 82-83.

> difference in the responses of the graduates, dropouts, and discharges.[3]

What is significant about this is that over half of these young people did have hopes for advancement. Certainly this was one of the goals of the Job Corps program. Whether or not there was a significant increase in their hopes for advancement because of their Job Corps experience was not measured.

More than half of those who were terminated in August 1966 felt that their situation was better after their Job Corps experience. Of those who were in the corps for more than six months, seventy-four per cent thought that their situation had improved. In summarizing these findings the report states that

> there is clear evidence that a successful stay in the Job Corps can improve a youth's chances. The graduates and those in centers over six months have not only improved their employment situation and their pay rate more than the other groups, but they also sense this improvement. Whether these groups will maintain their advantage in the future is a question that, at this point, cannot be answered.
>
> It must also be remembered that the graduates represented only 32% of the August 1966 terminations. The other 68% have not done as well as the graduates since leaving the Job Corps. If the Job Corps is to be a real success, the completion rate must be significantly increased.
>
> Follow-up placement procedures must also be improved. For the value of the training the corpsmen receive, whether or not they finish a course, is

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[3] Ibid., p. 84.

> wasted if they cannot find a job in which they can apply what they have learned.[4]

While the study indicated that Job Corps training was beneficial, it reinforced some criticisms that had been leveled against the program. Only forty-eight per cent of those interviewed felt that the screening agency had given them an accurate picture of the Job Corps program. Graduates were more likely than dropouts and dismissals to feel that they had been given a true picture. Still only fifty-two per cent of that group thought the screening agency had been realistic. The corpsmen's major complaints were that they did not get the training promised, they did not get the money promised, living conditions were not as good as promised, the program was built up too much, and their movements were more restricted than they had expected.[5]

Corpsmen also felt that the job training that they received was insufficient for getting a job. Even the majority of the graduates expressed this view.[6] This helps to explain the fact that less than twenty-five per cent of the August terminations were using Job Corps skills in their present job.[7]

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[4]Ibid., pp. 91-93.

[5]Ibid., pp. 26-28.

[6]Ibid., p. 51.

[7]Ibid., pp. 76-77.

The Chamber of Commerce study also found that the job training program of the Job Corps was inadequate. This report was based on interviews with approximately 300 Corps graduates and 245 employers of graduates.[8] Seventy-six per cent of the corpsmen interviewed, who were unemployed or under-employed prior to their Job Corps experience, had found work. However, only 28 per cent were using Job Corps skills.[9] This was due partially to the fact that enrollees were trained for positions for which they were too young to qualify. Job Corps officials thought that the solution to this problem lay in keeping enrollees at the centers for a longer period of time. The average length of stay was only nine months. Raising the age for Job Corps entrance was rejected as a solution because officials believed that younger enrollees made an easier social adjustment.[10] The Chamber of Commerce report indicated that the answer was to revise the laws and policies so that youths could get these positions at 18.[11]

Some employers thought that the majority of the graduates were only poor or satisfactory in on-the-job performance. The report concluded that this low opinion of corps graduates

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[8]Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Youth and the War on Poverty: An Evaluation of the Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and Project Head Start (n.p.: Chamber of Commerce, 1967), p. 7.

[9]Ibid., p. 1.

[10]Ibid., p. 8.

[11]Ibid., p. 3.

held by some employers could harm placement efforts in the future.[12]

The placement program of the Job Corps was criticized by both the Chamber of Commerce report and the Harris survey. Only fourteen per cent of those interviewed by the Chamber of Commerce had gotten their jobs through the efforts of the Job Corps placement program.[13] Those that were placed by the Job Corps were not always placed in positions which made use of their training.[14] The Harris figures were even worse. Only six per cent of those working had obtained their position with assistance from the Job Corps.[15]

The Chamber of Commerce study also discussed the difficulty of obtaining adequate data with which to evaluate the program.

> Evaluation of the Job Corps program is difficult, because reasonable data by which evaluations can be made are unavailable. OEO can supply gross statistics about programs, but detailed statistics and information regarding cost, educational accomplishment, and enrollee placement are imprecise, or non-existent...Different offices in the same division of the Office of Economic Opportunity give widely-varying statistical responses to the same question.[16]

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[12] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

[13] Ibid., p. 10.

[14] Ibid., p. 9.

[15] Harris, August 1966 Terminations..., p. 78.

[16] Chamber of Commerce, Youth and the War on Poverty..., p. 13.

The report urged that a "complete data system" be established to provide "benchmarks by which the program can be measured in order to make necessary changes."[17]

Yet, in spite of the program's defects, the Chamber of Commerce discovered that the majority of the graduates interviewed thought that the Job Corps experience was the best experience of their lives.[18] The Chamber of Commerce warned that

> past problems should not trigger the scrapping of what could be a good idea; the value of residential vocation schools can be preserved. The promise of the Job Corps could be made a reality...[19]

Job Corps officials criticized the Chamber of Commerce report because they thought that "the sample was too small to be an accurate survey." Despite this, they found many encouraging things in the report and called these to the attention of the Congress.

> 76 per cent formerly unemployed or underemployed youths have been gainfully employed after Job Corps; 87 per cent of the enrollees said the training was good to excellent; 86 per cent said the program was good to great; 71 per cent of the employers rate work habits as satisfactory to excellent; 81 per cent rate skills satisfactory to excellent, and the median wages are $1.51 to $1.70 per hour.[20]

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[17] Ibid., p. 4.

[18] Ibid., p. 1.

[19] Ibid., p. 21.

[20] U.S., Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Education and Labor, Economic Opportunity Act Amendments of 1967, Hearings...H.R. 8311, 90th Congress, 1st session, 1967, p. 501.

While these two reviews showed weaknesses of the Job Corps program, they also indicated definite accomplishments. Also in 1967, a number of steps were taken in response to earlier criticisms. The Job Corps Centers had been directed by Congress in 1966 to improve relations with their surrounding communities. William P. Kelly, who became director of the program in 1967, worked diligently to carry out this directive. In March he set up a "Salute the Communities Week" to give Job Corps enrollees an opportunity to thank the communities for their support. Among the activities during the week were visits by residents to the centers, dinners, and gatherings with civic clubs. Kelly told reporters that students at the centers had been actively involved in community work throughout the year collecting funds for charities, assisting in work with underprivileged children, working cleanup campaigns, and fighting forest fires among other things.[21]

It was around the time of "Salute the Communities Week" that Kelly wrote to 284 local officials to feel out their reaction to the Job Corps centers. Seventy-eight of the 111 responding supported the center in their community. Only one was strongly opposed to the center. Six responses seemed negative although they did not actually state their opposition. Twenty-six replied that they could not speak for the

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[21] New York Times, March 27, 1967.

community. On the whole the replies indicated that relations with the communities had improved. Much of this was due to the centers' contributions to the communities.[22]

Kelly also worked towards implementing another directive from the 1966 Congress: establishing standards for the corps. The preface to the new conduct code stated that

> Every job has rules on how you should look and act. Job Corps also has such rules. This booklet tells you what they are. By following Job Corps rules, you learn to follow the rules of the job you will go to after Job Corps.
>
> They and we expect that you will: be polite, not swear or use dirty words, avoid being loud and rowdy, be neat, clean, and properly dressed according to center rules, keep hair neat and presentable.
>
> In addition: men must not wear hats or any head coverage in buildings except when required; men must shave regularly, women must not wear rollers in public areas.

The code went on to prohibit hitchhiking, smoking in bed, gambling and alcohol on the center premises.[23]

Similar standards were established for the staff. Included were the following:

> Clothes should always be neat and clean; women's hairstyles should be conservative and their make-up should be moderate; when a staff member wears a beard, he should do so with the knowledge that his example may be followed by corpsmembers and this imitation may reduce a corpsmember's chance of employment.

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[22] Ibid., April 16, 1967.

[23] Ibid., March 19, 1967.

Staff members were cautioned to

> be particularly careful to come to work on time and to be punctual in meeting their daily schedules; not use vulgar or obscene language; know and comply with regulations on accountability and care of center property.

They were warned to

> keep the respect of corpsmembers by maintaining a serious workmanlike attitude and by avoiding becoming 'one of the boys.'

They were also instructed to

> always address corpsmembers with respect, and maintain the necessary personal touch by clearly showing interest and regard for corpsmembers' problems and aspirations.[24]

It is doubtful if such a code did much to improve relationships between staff members and officials in Washington, but the Congressional requirement was satisfied.

There were only a few incidents involving Job Corps Centers that were reported in the New York Times in 1967. Representative Edith Green stated before the House Education and Labor Committee that at one of the women's centers a staff member had given narcotics to enrollees and gotten several of them pregnant. She declined to name the center and went on to say that after she informed officials of the situation, it was corrected.[25]

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[24]U.S., Office of Economic Opportunity, Job Corps Staff Code (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967), 3 fold pamphlet.

[25]New York Times, July 15, 1967.

At the McCook Center twelve corpsmen were expelled after a fight which left three corpsmen injured.[26] This was followed by an administrative scandal in Oklahoma where a Job Corps center was accused of falsifying its records to show more enrollees than were actually present at the camp. A report submitted to the House Education and Labor Committee stated that OEO's regional headquarters ordered the center at Guthrie to wait to report dropouts until the next fiscal year. The report stated that a request by center officials to get the order in writing was turned down. Kelly said the report was "pure bunk."[27]

These were only minor incidents. In a message to Congress in March, President Johnson discussed successes of the Job Corps. He pointed out that more than 60,000 had been enrolled in the past two years. Of these 60,000, he said,

> 26,000 hold jobs earning an average of $1.71 per hour. 4,500 are back in school to complete an education they have been motivated to seek. 3,500 are in the armed services. Many of them had been previously rejected because they failed to meet medical or educational standards.

Not only had the enrollees benefited, but also the public education system had benefited. Eighty-four schools were then using educational materials developed for the Job Corps program. In addition corpsmen had made valuable contribu-

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[26] Ibid., August 4, 1967.

[27] Ibid., September 20, 1967.

tions through their work on conservation projects and their development of various public facilities. Johnson said that the experience of the preceding years would "permit tighter cost controls, firmer discipline, and more effective recruitment and placement."[28]

Although the antipoverty program emerged from the 1967 legislative session with little revision, the Job Corps had to fight for its life. Representative Landrum, who had guided the original bill through Congress, urged that the Job Corps be phased out.[29] Carl Curtis, Republican Senator from Nebraska, introduced an amendment to abolish the Job Corps program which was defeated by a vote of 30 to 49.[30]

The final act amended the Job Corps program as follows: the age for entrance into the corps was lowered to 14; the OEO director was charged with tightening the screening process to make sure that candidates' needs could best be met by the Job Corps and to eliminate those with "a history of serious or violent behavior against persons or property, repetitive delinquent acts, narcotics addiction, or other behavioral aberrations;" community advisory councils were to be

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[28]U.S., Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, 1953-), Lyndon B. Johnson, 1967, p. 338.

[29]New York Times, August 22, 1967.

[30]Congressional Quarterly Service, Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1967 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1968), p. 1073.

established to assist in improving relationships with local communities; with the cooperation of public employment service officers, the director was instructed to evaluate enrollees' capabilities and seek positions for them appropriate to their capabilities and to follow up on their progress; the OEO director was also responsible for carefully comparing and evaluating the effectiveness of residential and non-residential training; women were to make up at least twenty-five per cent of the enrollees by June 30, 1968 and the director was charged with working towards a goal of fifty per cent; the allowed cost per enrollee for centers in operation more than nine months was reduced to $6,900; enrollees and employees of the corps were prohibited from taking an active part in any political campaigns.[31]

Although the Job Corps had worked diligently to improve its image in 1967, Congressional response was cool. Evaluative reports issued during the year, although not damning, showed definite weaknesses in the program. Isolated incidents from previous years had not been forgotten. As the 1968 election year approached, it appeared that the major concern of the nation had shifted. While riots had been a part of every summer since Watts erupted in 1965, the summer of 1967 was the worst. The riot count was forty-three at

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[31] Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1967, Statutes at Large, LXXXI, 672-682 (1967).

the end of 1966. The summer of 1967 raised the count to 164.[32] The nation that had seemed to give Johnson a clear mandate for his poverty and civil rights programs in 1964, now focused on the issue of "law and order."

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[32]Theodore H. White, The Making of the President, 1968 (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 201-203.

"We had a dream too."

Corpsman banner at Camp Kilmer demonstration protesting center's closing, April 12, 1969.

CHAPTER VII

REACTIONS

The Job Corps received very little adverse publicity in 1968. As a matter of fact, it received very little publicity at all during the year. But it was the quiet before a storm.

OEO's annual report for 1968 showed that 195,000 had enrolled in the Job Corps program since its inception; 73,000 were enrolled in the Job Corps in 1968; 40,800 of these were employed after the program in positions where they received an average of $1.70 an hour; 5,100 returned to school; the armed forces provided places for 5,600. Thus, 51,500 or 70 per cent of the 1968 enrollees were successfully placed after leaving the corps.[1]

The educational program of the Job Corps continued to be billed as a major success. A 1968 publication of the Economic Opportunity Office pointed out that educational materials designed for the Job Corps were being used by more than 2,000 public school systems.[2] Both the Air Force

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[1]U.S., Office of Economic Opportunity, As the Seed is Sown /Fourth Annual Report, 1968/ (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969), pp. 54-55.

[2]U.S., Office of Economic Opportunity, Job Corps Reports (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 185.

and the National Education Association commended the materials stating that significant gains in reading and mathematics had resulted from using these materials with servicemen and public school students.[3]

However, the Job Corps still had its critics. They were springing up on the left as well as on the right. In the April issue of Liberation, a publication of the Underground Press Syndicate, the Job Corps was accused of channeling its enrollees into the armed forces. According to the authors, the Corps recruited those who were classed as 1-Y because of illiteracy. It trained them. Their class then changed to 1-A and they were grabbed up by the military services. To illustrate this, they used the Oakland induction center and the Parks Corps Camp. Recruiters were stationed at Oakland to line up rejects for the Job Corps program. At the other end, buses ran daily from Camp Parks to the induction center bringing back the rejects who would now qualify.[4]

An article, which appeared in the Journal of Negro Education in 1968, while highly favorable, mentioned some weaknesses of the program. The number of staff members was insufficient and corpsmen did not receive enough personal attention. Inadequate recreation activities gave the

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[3]OEO, As the Seed..., p. 55.

[4]Reese Erlich and Michael Smith, "The Job Corps Builds Men," Liberation, XIII (April 1968), pp. 26-31.

enrollees too much time to get in trouble. Also, the article objected to corpsmen and prison labor being used in close proximity and sometimes for the same work. That established a "linkage between the prisoners" and the Job Corps members that was undesirable. The story, based on interviews with corpsmen, stated, however, that overall the program was achieving a great deal. The major emphasis was on

> the enormous importance of the Job Corps to the Negro male in creating in him a sense of manliness by giving him the ego-supportive programs and approaches that lead to independence, which re-affirms manhood, and a credo of responsibility which he must live up to in order to maintain his manhood.[5]

The Job Corps program saw little action in Congress in 1968. Appropriations authorized for the Office of Economic Opportunity were the highest in its history. There was no breakdown by program such as there had been in the previous two years.[6]

The year was an agonizing one for the nation. Rioting did not wait for summer weather, but began early in February. In April Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated. His death was followed by a week of violence in more than 100 cities throughout the nation. Over 50,000 troops were called in to quell the disturbances in which 39 people lost their lives.

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[5]Robert E. Weber, "Feed back and the Job Corps," Journal of Negro Education, XXXVII (Winter 1968), pp. 55-61.

[6]Congressional Quarterly Service, Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1968 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1969), pp. 593-595.

Nearly 20,000 people were arrested.[7]

Two months later Robert Kennedy was dead. Kennedy had been concerned with the plight of young people during the early days of his brother's administration. Also he was realistic about flaws in current manpower training programs. In To Seek a Newer World, he observed that

> We have again and again trained people for jobs that did not exist... Some manpower-training administrators concentrate on the candidates who already have some skill, thus avoiding a heavy dropout problem so that they can produce impressive statistics when the program comes up for refunding.[8]

Youth employment programs lost an ally with Robert Kennedy's death. His assassination also led to the fragmentation of the many divergent groups which he had united, and produced more disillusionment.

Afraid of riots and violence, which they could not control, and weary of a war in Vietnam, which they could not understand, many Americans believed that Richard Nixon was right when he said that it was time for a change. Richard Nixon was no friend of the Economic Opportunity Act. In 1966 he said that Johnson's domestic policies would destroy freedom and "trigger a recession to wipe out all the gains in 10 years." He anticipated that the majority of Americans under "LBJ programs" would receive guaranteed incomes "whether

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[7]Theodore H. White, The Making of the President, 1968 (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 209.

[8]Robert F. Kennedy, To Seek a Newer World (New York: Bantam, 1968), p. 32.

they work for it or not."[9] The platform on which he ran in 1968 called for "a Complete overhaul of the nation's job programs...Some of these programs are ineffective and should be eliminated. We will simplify the Federal effort."[10] His election in 1968 certainly weakened the Job Corps' position at the White House.

On February 19, 1969, President Nixon sent a message to Congress announcing the transfer of the Job Corps program to the Labor Department.[11] What the Republicans had been unable to accomplish through legislative action was carried out with the stroke of a pen by the new Republican President. Within two months after this announcement, Nixon made public plans to close fifty-nine of the Job Corps centers then in operation. The transfer and the closings were both to become effective by July 1, 1969.[12] A senate resolution asking that the Administration postpone the closing of the centers until Congress had had time to review pending anti-poverty legislation was defeated by a vote of 52 to 40.[13]

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[9]Congressional Quarterly Service, Candidates 1968 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1968), p. 35.

[10]CQ Almanac, 1968, p. 969.

[11]U.S., Congress, Senate, Labor and Public Welfare Committee, Closing of Job Corps Centers, Hearings... 91st Congress, 1st session, 1969, p. 6.

[12]Congressional Quarterly Service, Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1969 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1970), p. 486.

[13]Ibid., p. 486.

The Job Corps' position was considerably weakened by a report issued by the government auditing agency, the General Accounting Office, in March. The report reviewed the entire antipoverty program, and while most of the projects received favorable evaluations, the Job Corps was the subject of severe criticisms. The report stated that

> the Congress should consider whether the Job Corps program, particularly at the conservation centers, is sufficiently achieving the purposes for which it was created to justify its retention at present levels.[14]

From beginning to end the program was criticized. On recruitment the report stated that the recruiters lacked initiative and did not "actually solicit youths in hard core poverty areas." Eligibility requirements were often waived to meet quotas, and still the quotas were not met. In addition, there was little attempt on the part of recruiters to determine if the Job Corps was the most appropriate program for those applying.[15]

While the urban centers provided the most advanced training, the original attempts to send the more advanced enrollees to these centers was discontinued in November 1968.

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[14] U.S., Comptroller General, Review of Economic Opportunity Programs by the Comptroller General of the United States Made Pursuant to Title II of the 1967 Amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 12.

[15] Ibid., pp. 54-55.

The reason for this was so that youths could be sent to the centers closest to their homes.[16]

On the positive side, the report pointed out that "the longer a corps member stayed in the program, the better his post Job Corps experience was." However, in the centers studied by the General Accounting Office, more than half the corpsmen stayed less than six months.[17]

At the time of the report, uniform graduation standards were just beginning to be implemented. Prior to this, standards had been left to each individual center. The conservation center standards went into effect in May 1968. The GAO interviewers felt that few of the graduates they contacted would have measured up to these standards. While the urban centers were establishing standards in vocational areas, there were still no criteria for graduation.[18]

The General Accounting Office questioned the Economic Opportunity Office's statistics concerning conservation work performed.

> We found that various methods of assigning appraised values to completed work projects were being used at the centers reviewed, which did not, in some cases, provide assurance that the assigned appraisal values were realistic.

The report stated that $15 million of the $46 million worth

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[16]Ibid., p. 56.

[17]Ibid., p. 56.

[18]Ibid., pp. 58-59.

of conservation work claimed by OEO was for development of Job Corps facilities. This seemed "more closely associated with the costs of providing training to corpsmen than with the conservation of natural resources."[19]

Payments made to Job Corps members were not being handled properly either according to the report. The Army Finance Center which was responsible for making these payments lacked a set of prescribed procedures.[20] Advances made to corpsmen, and not properly reported to the center, resulted in the loss of about $115,000 in 1967. If these advances had been reported, they would have been deducted from separation allowances. In many cases corpsmen received pay for which, because of absences, they were not entitled. Again this stemmed from improper reporting procedures. The reporting procedures varied from center to center resulting in unequal treatment of enrollees.[21]

While the report showed that employment and earning records were improved after the Job Corps experience, it found this "attributable, for the most part, to the greater employability of youths due to the process of growing up and to higher employment and wage levels." Only twenty-five per

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[19]Ibid., p. 61.

[20]Ibid., pp. 155-156.

[21]U.S., Comptroller General, Selected Aspects of Payments and Charges to Job Corps Members (Washington, D.C.: General Accounting Office, 1969), tear sheet.

cent of the former corpsmen studied were using their Job Corps training. "Job Corps terminees had not done materially better than the other eligible youths who applied to enter the program and then chose not to participate."[22] The statistical table that it used to prove this fact proves it for men only however. The table also points out that the "no-show" men had a higher wage level prior to acceptance into the Job Corps than did the enrollees. Thus, the enrollees had made more gains because they were at the same level as the "no-show" men a year after the program.[23]

One of the major criticisms of the GAO report was that it looked at the weaknesses of the program only. It stated as much in Chapter Two. "Our review properly and inevitably focuses on problems, shortcomings, and recommended improvements."[24] Such an approach seemed unlikely to give a balanced view of the overall program.

Shortly after the Comptroller General's study was released, another report by Louis Harris was made public. This presented the Job Corps in a more favorable light, although problem areas were discussed. This time, the Harris report was based on interviews with those who had had contact with corpsmen, in addition to the corpsmen. The latter fell into

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[22]Comptroller General, Review of Economic Opportunity Programs..., p. 51.

[23]Ibid., pp. 63-67.

[24]Ibid., p. 15.

one of two categories: corpsmen terminated 6-8 months prior to study; corpsmen terminated 12-15 months prior to study. The youths were broken down into three groups: those who had been in the corps 90 days or more and completed the program (category I); those who had been in the corps over 90 days and had not completed the program (category II); those who had been in the program less than 90 days (category III).

Individuals who had known the corpsmen before they entered the Job Corps were asked to rank the corpsmen on various characteristics. For every characteristic, the reference individuals indicated that the corpsmen ranked significantly higher after their Job Corps experience. These characteristics included: able to make plans for the future, gets along well with others, has chance of being a success, good physical condition, good idea of what he wants to do, concerned about appearance, gets along well with family, prepared to get a good job, willing to accept responsibility, hardworking, self-confident, independent, willing to accept discipline.[25] Again those who completed the program ranked higher than the other groups.[26] Black young

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[25] Louis Harris and Associates, A survey of Ex-Job Corpsmen (Washington, D.C.: Louis Harris and Associates, 1969), p. 54 in appendix to Congress, House, Education and Labor Committee, Economic Opportunity Act Amendments of 1969, Hearings...91st Congress, 1st session, 1969.

[26] Ibid., p. 48.

people dominated the program and had the best retention rate.[27]

The report, like the earlier Harris report, showed that the employment and earnings positions of corpsmen were significantly improved by their experience in the corps and that the longer one stayed in the corps, the better his record upon leaving the corps. However, one alarming fact appeared at this time which had not materialized in the earlier study. While there was a large jump between pre-Job Corps and post-Job Corps employment and earnings rates, there seemed to be a leveling off after that initial jump. The six month group was earning $1.79 an hour, 38¢ more than before Job Corps. But the twelve month group was only earning 5¢ more than that or $1.84.[28]

In his testimony about the appearance of this plateau-like phenomenon, Louis Harris gave two possible interpretations.

> One is that one might make an extreme claim that the Job Corps effect is therefore ephemeral, it is temporary, it fades quickly. The Job Corps provides no depth. It has no staying power. These results prove that those who dropped out might ultimately do as well as those who stayed in or certainly almost catch up.../or/ it could mean that as the Job Corps experience falls back into time, the old pre-Job Corps world begins to take over again...A bottom of the barrel existence begins to take over...What this suggests is that these young people in order to sustain the increases that were shown clearly at the 6 month mark could

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[27] Ibid., p. 3.

[28] Ibid., p. 28.

> well need, if not formal training, certainly a counseling service. They need guidance. They need help. At the 12 month mark, the 2 year mark, the 3 year mark, the 4 year mark out... if they are just left to their own devices, back in the same old setting, back in the same atmosphere of disadvantaged discrimination, down to the bottom of the heap, then quickly they can be smothered again.[29]

But the President was not willing to make such a commitment and the Congress was not willing to force his hand. Secretary of Labor George P. Schultz said that Job Corps cutbacks would save the government $100 million during the next fiscal year.[30] An editorial in the New York Times expressed the view that priorities were mixed up when programs such as the Job Corps were severely cut while "the administration can make only trifling cuts in the Army Corps of Engineers pork-barrel program."[31]

The trade unions were among the most vocal opponents of Job Corps reductions. They had been an ally of the program from its inception in 1964.[32] In 1966, organized labor was asked to conduct training programs,[33] and by 1969 AFL-CIO

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[29]U.S., Congress, House, Education and Labor Committee, Economic Opportunity Act Amendments of 1969, Hearings... 91st Congress, 1st session, 1969, pp. 530-531.

[30]CQ Almanac, 1969, p. 486.

[31]New York Times, April 16, 1969.

[32]David Sullivan, "Labor's Role in the War on Poverty," American Federationist, LXXIII (April 1966), p. 10.

[33]U.S., Congress, Senate, Labor and Public Welfare Committee, Closing..., p. 420.

affiliates were directing programs in over forty centers. These unions guaranteed a job to their graduates.[34]

The AFL-CIO also assisted other graduates of the Job Corps. In 1967 they established a visitation and recruitment program "to let labor leaders see the Job Corps in action, to get labor leaders to help the centers in the placement process, and to help recruit for the Job Corps." Within the first year more than 500 labor officials had participated in these tours and they were favorably impressed.[35]

In a letter to President Nixon, George Meany, President of the AFL-CIO, protested the reduction of the Job Corps program. He reminded the President that

> The Job Corps has, in effect, been a human reclamation program. It has taken thousands of young people off the streets, away from meaningless lives of frustration and anger and has returned them to society as useful productive citizens. Whatever its shortcomings, the positive results of this program speak for themselves.[36]

The AFL-CIO also objected to shifting the program to the Department of Labor. Such a shift would force the Job Corps "to compete with other lower-priority programs" in

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[34]U.S., Congress, House, Education and Labor Committee, EOA Amendments of 1969..., p. 1154-55.

[35]Julius F. Rothman, "A look at the War on Poverty," American Federationist, LXXXIV (November 1967), p. 5.

[36]U.S., Congress, House, Education and Labor Committee, Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1969, Hearings... 91st Congress, 1st session, 1969, p. 639.

the department and "the innovative and imaginative qualities that have characterized the development of new OEO programs would be destroyed."[37]

But the administration ignored these protests. The number of training slots in the program was reduced from 32,000 to 22,000. This included the 4,300 spots to be established in the new smaller urban skills centers that Nixon planned to establish.[38] Actually, there were 16,404 enrollees who were displaced by the closing. Schultz said that based on previous experience only about 8,000 of these would be interested in relocating. Schultz figured that there would be spots for all but 1,558 of these. He figured that each center could expand capacity by five per cent adding an additional 980 beds. Thus only 575 would be displaced. Then, he said, Puerto Rico was planning to continue to operate its centers giving an additional 450 spots.[39]

Schultz's reasoning raised some obvious questions. What about the 8,000 who were not interested in relocating? Some of these would be graduating, but not all. To throw up additional stumbling blocks for these kids whose lives had been full of frustrations seemed callous indeed. To release them

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[37]U.S., Congress, House, Education and Labor Committee, Economic Opportunity Act Amendments of 1967, Hearings...90th Congress, 1st session, 1967, p. 2843-44.

[38]CQ Almanac, 1969, p. 486.

[39]U.S., Senate, Closing of Job Corps Centers..., pp. 252-255.

to unemployment in the cities at the beginning of the summer was definitely risky. Relocation of the additional 8,000 or so would surely be expensive. Many could not understand why the government did not phase out the program at the centers to be closed so that the confusion, expense, and frustration of relocation could be avoided.

At Camp Kilmer, corpsmen demonstrated against the closing of their center. A banner spotted by a New York Times reporter was poignant. It read "We had a dream too."[40]

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[40] New York Times, April 12, 1969.

"Aristocratic nations are naturally too liable to narrow the scope of human perfectibility; democratic nations, to expand it beyond reason."

Alexis de Tocqueville

CHAPTER VIII

DREAMS

Arthur Mann, professor of history at Smith College, has said that "Populism, Progressivism, and the New Deal rested on a common assumption, namely, that one could wring a higher standard of living out of the Industrial Revolution for all the people within the framework of constitutional government and capitalism."[1] The Economic Opportunity Act rested on that same assumption.

Like the reforms at the turn of the century, OEO was born during prosperous times. Its supporters defended their work with a moralistic zeal akin to the fervor of their progressive predecessors. Lyndon Johnson's discussion of the program's name illustrates this. "The title War on Poverty was decided on...I wanted to rally the nation, to sound a call to arms which would stir people in the government, in private industry, and on the campuses to lend their talents to a massive effort to eliminate the evil."[2]

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[1]Arthur Mann, "The Progressive Tradition," in The Reconstruction of American History, ed. by John Higham (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 164.

[2]Lyndon Baines Johnson, The Vantage Point, Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969 (New York: Hold, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), p. 74.

The New Deal was created to cope with a severe economic depression. Its justification was less moralistic than practical. While the Progressives had focused on eliminating the evils of monopolies and political machines, New Deal liberals were more concerned with managing the economy to bring about recovery and to prevent such severe depressions from occurring in the future.[3] However, there were moral overtones in the New Deal's creation of a folk heroic group, "the little people." In the sixties, "the little people" gave way to "the disadvantaged."

The Job Corps had its roots in New Deal legislation. The corps was begun with reminiscences about the days of the Civilian Conservation Corps, but the problems that the two programs attempted to solve were different. The CCC aimed at giving jobs to temporarily unemployed young people who were victims of the depression; the Job Corps was assigned the more difficult task of salvaging young people from backgrounds of hard-core poverty in the midst of abundance.

In 1969, the typical Job Corps enrollee was 17½ years old. He had completed nine years of school, although his reading and math performance was at the fifth grade level. In the conservation centers the average corpsman's reading level was below the fourth grade. Sixty-seven per cent had no record of misbehavior and only 8 per cent had been

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[3]Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform from Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: Vintage, 1955), pp. 310-313.

convicted of a serious crime; 44 per cent held jobs prior to entering the Job Corps and they earned an average hourly rate of $1.27; 63 per cent of the male enrollees had been rejected by the Armed Forces; 80 per cent had not seen a doctor or dentist in the last ten years; 60 per cent came from a broken home, while the homes of 63 per cent of the enrollees were headed by an unemployed individual; 60 per cent lived in substandard housing; for 49 per cent, both parents had less than an eighth grade education.[4]

Judging from the facts presented in the first chapter, young people with backgrounds such as this were likely to repeat their parents' experiences of poverty and frustration. The Job Corps was devised to give these young people a chance, an opportunity to rise out of the poverty in which they had been raised. But its youngest enrollees had already fourteen years of frustration. The task that Americans carved out for this program was tremendous. Few Americans, including those who were to run the program, had any realistic conception of the seriousness of the problem or the patience and diligence required to ameliorate it.

When Lyndon Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act into law he stated that "today for the first time in all the history of the human race, a great nation is able to make and is willing to make a commitment to eradicate poverty

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[4]U.S., Congress, Senate, Labor and Public Welfare Committee, Closing of the Job Corps Centers, Hearings... 91st Congress, 1st session, 1969, p. 199.

among its people."[5] While he set no time limit for this accomplishment, the first annual report of the Office of Economic Opportunity promised "that poverty in the United States will be abolished in our time."[6] Such a promise was unrealistic and left the entire anti-poverty plan an easy target for its critics when it did not live up to its pledge.

The Economic Opportunity Act was sponsored by the Democratic Party and its passage followed a bitter partisan fight. The bill was introduced during an election year, and many Republicans referred to it as an "election year gimmick." The OEO administrator was referred to derisively as the "poverty czar" and, immediately after the act was passed, Republican Representative Frelinghuysen introduced a resolution that would establish a select committee to maintain a constant vigil over EOA activities.[7] Republicans lacked sufficient strength to pass the resolution, but its introduction indicates the type of hostility which many Republicans directed towards the Economic Opportunity Act.

Southern Democrats in the House were the force which

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[5]Johnson, Vantage Point, p. 81.

[6]U.S., Office of Economic Opportunity, A Nation Aroused, 1st Annual Report, 1965 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 7.

[7]U.S., Congress, House, Representative Frelinghuysen speaking for a Select Committee on the Administration of the Economic Opportunity Act, 88th Congress, 2d session, August 10, 1964, Congressional Record, CX, p. 20311.

decided the fate of the bill. President Johnson, in a politically skillful move, persuaded Phil Landrum of Georgia to manage the measure in the House. He rallied sufficient support from among his southern colleagues to get the bill passed. However, their support was lukewarm, not enthusiastic. They were not likely to be staunch defenders if the program came under attack.

The Job Corps had been one of the most controversial sections of the anti-poverty bill. Critics claimed that it was too expensive, its residential character was unnecessary, it took on functions of the public school, it duplicated other job training efforts, and so forth - the list of objections was lengthy. Officials of the Job Corps were anxious to silence their opponents by producing significant results quickly. Also, they needed impressive statistics to present to the next Congress with their budget requests.

Although criticized for implementing the program before it had been approved by Congress, the OEO planners had actually done little to prepare for the enormous tasks of getting the centers in operational condition, recruiting enrollees, devising the necessary educational and vocational training methods, and establishing adequate counseling and placement procedures. These were difficult problems requiring careful planning and evaluation, but there was not sufficient time. A great deal of waste, inefficiency, and inadequacy resulted from the haste with which these issues were handled. The

Job Corps learned from its early mistakes, but it was not able to rid itself of the stigma which was quickly attached to the bungling new program.

The press provided the nation with its view of the Job Corps. During the program's first two years of operation, newspapers were filled with accounts of corps riots, waste, and inefficiency. These articles were based on isolated incidents in a few camps. In 1967, stories about the camps began to decline, and by 1968, they were practically non-existent.

William P. Kelly, appointed Job Corps Director in 1967, had done much to correct conditions that had been severely criticized. At the beginning of 1969, he was able to report that 148,604 enrollees had been trained and placed by the Job Corps. They were earning an average wage of $1.82 an hour, 42¢ higher than before entering the Job Corps. In addition 17,832 had returned to school and 16,346 were in the armed forces. During 1967 and 1968, $66,755,142 of conservation work was performed. The educational programs designed for the corps were being used by schools throughout the nation. Trade unions had become actively involved in the job training program bringing to it their valuable years of experience and skill. In addition, sorely needed medical and dental attention was provided for these young people.[8] Discipline had been tightened; community relations

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[8]U.S., Congress, Senate, Labor and Public Welfare Committee, Closing..., pp. 188-191.

had been improved; costs were down.

However, the press did not pay much attention to these accomplishments. The corps' reputation was established during its early years of operation by the news media. When the incidents dwindled, the Job Corps ceased to be a major news story. The public was left with fuzzy recollections of an extravagant, incompetent, crime-filled program. This was, of course, an inaccurate picture, but it was not corrected. These memories, coupled with events in 1968, did not put the Job Corps in a very favorable position.

Americans had berated themselves in the early sixties for the presence of so much poverty amidst their affluence. Hostility replaced guilt in the latter half of the decade, however, when the ghettos erupted. Many of the poor and black were frustrated by unfulfilled promises. Many middle class whites were puzzled and disillusioned because of the complexities and weaknesses of the economic opportunity programs.

Law and order and the war in Vietnam became the issues of the 1968 campaign. Poverty legislation no longer had center stage. Richard Nixon had spoken out against the extravagance of EOA measures and his election in 1968 signaled the probability of changes in the program. Within two months after his inauguration he shifted the Job Corps to the Department of Labor and shortly thereafter he announced the closing of fifty-nine centers.

The Democratic administration had consistently rejected the idea of shifting any part of the War on Poverty program to established departments. They believed that one central coordinating agency could best represent the interest of the nation's poor. Splintering the program among the departments would weaken its impact. It would be easy for anti-poverty measures to be lost among the numerous programs handled by the departments.

Since 1964, Republican opponents had been urging Congress to shift the Job Corps to the Department of Labor, but they were unable to muster sufficient support to do this. They won their victory with an executive order instead of a legislative amendment. The transfer had not even had a chance to take effect before the program was drastically reduced.

The General Accounting Office report gave support to the Nixon administration's position. But the report seemed to focus upon only two aspects of the Job Corps program: the efficiency with which the program was run, and the job training and placement activities. The original goals of the corps were much broader. The overall goal was renewal of the whole person. Kelly said that "the Job Corps has truly been a program aimed at total human renewal in that it has touched on every aspect of a deprived youngster's life."[9] Many critics of the Job Corps never did understand the distinction

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[9]Ibid., p. 191.

between this program and others that were concerned only with job training and placement.

Obviously the program had its flaws, but much had been learned from its mistakes. There was so much more to be learned, and, as Louis Harris pointed out in his testimony before the House Education and Labor Committee, so much more was needed. Six months was a short time but a great deal was accomplished for many enrollees in that six months. Returned to former conditions, they improved their situation for a while, then began to level off. An opportunity for continuing development and education was needed for these young people who had been through the program so that the gains that they had made would not be lost. But cutbacks came instead of additional assistance. Job training programs were substituted for a comprehensive renewal program.

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While there may be no such thing as a precisely defined national character, it seems obvious to the writer that, in the past, the mainstream of American thought has placed its faith in an elusive ideal called the "American Dream." The specifics of this dream have changed and evolved throughout our history but basically it has remained a belief in the ability of this country to provide the conditions which allow citizens to achieve a decent life free from want and to succeed at those things which they pursue with diligence.

Obstacles to this are sought out and eradicated because they are considered morally evil. Richard Hofstadter has observed that

> a great deal of both the strength and the weakness of our national existence lies in the fact that Americans do not abide very quietly the evils of life. We are forever restlessly pitting ourselves against them, demanding changes, improvements, remedies, but not often with sufficient sense of the limits that the human condition will in the end insistently impose upon us.[10]

Programs such as the Job Corps are created out of our nation's faith in this "American Dream." Ironically, it is this desire for great success which leads to the failure of many of these programs.[11] Americans have believed total success to be imminent and failing to achieve that, we have refused to accept the hope implicit in what small gains we may have achieved.

The Job Corps swallowed up in the Labor Department was a victim of our American idealism. Langston Hughes's description of the black experience in America aptly characterizes the young people sacrificed by the reduction and shifted emphasis of the Job Corps program:

> "Dream within a dream
>
> our dream deferred."

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[10]Hofstadter, Age of Reform, p. 16.

[11]Daniel P. Moynihan, Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding; Community Action in the War on Poverty (New York: The Free Press, 1969), pp. xii-xiii.

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The New York Times provided information about incidents at Job Corps Camps and was useful also for assessing community reaction to the centers.

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